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THE LAST DAYS OF THE ARCHDUKE RUDOLPH



Photograph: Stanley's Press Agency.

THE ARCHDUKE RUDOLPH, AGED 30, 1888.

THE LAST DAYS OF THE ARCHDUKE RUDOLPH

EDITED BY

HAMIL GRANT

AUTHOR OF
"SPIES AND SECRET SERVICE"



WITH SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

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PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

THE ARCHDUKE RUDOLPH: Crown Prince of Austria-Hungary, born at Laxenburg Castle, Vienna, 1858, found dead at Meyerling Schloss, 30th January 1889. Universally admitted to have been one of the most intellectual princes in Europe in his day; a keen politician and a student of democratic and labour movements; contributor to political and literary newspapers and magazines, two of which he himself helped to edit; was a noted sportsman; corresponded with the most important men of his time, and was on terms of especial intimacy with the then Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VII.

MADEMOISELLE MARIE VETSERA: daughter of a Hungarian baron, whose wife was of the Baltazzi family of bankers, well known in the Levant. Attached to the suite of the Empress Elizabeth, mother of the Archduke Rudolph, Mademoiselle Vetsera, still in her teens and a girl of great beauty, soon attracted the attention and won the heart of the Crown Prince, the *liaison* lasting from 1888 till January 1889, when, with her lover, she was found dead at Meyerling Lodge in Lower Austria. Mademoiselle Vetsera, it seems clear, was no *intrigante* or adventuress, but was deeply attached to the Archduke Rudolph.

COUNT ARTHUR POTOCKI: born 1857, a member of the distinguished family of that name, which has given many men and women of note to the political, social and literary life of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. A relative of the Minister of the same name.

BN FR. X. KINSKY: born 1861, member of a cadet branch of the famous family of Kinsky, the present head of which is Prince Karl Kinsky, who, as Count Kinsky, was a well-known sportsman on the European turf, and steered the steeplechaser Zoedone to victory in the Liverpool Grand National.

COUNT WOLFRAM: a connection, by marriage, of several notable Viennese families, and, until 1905, one of the wealthiest racing-men on the Continental turf.

HERR ISIDORE KOINOFF: an Austrian Pole who migrated to the United States after the tragedy of Meyerling in 1889, and has been successful in amassing, under a new name, a considerable fortune in the Middle West as a publishing newspaperman. Has contributed to the United States press anonymous recollections of his Berlin-Vienna experiences.

MADAME "LARRICARDA": a member of a good but impoverished Austrian family, of whom it has been said that she "was probably an unconscious agent of Berlin's secret service." This lady was one of several persons who were banished from Austria as a result of the tragedy of Meyerling.

JOSEPH BRATFISCH: a member of the Archduke Rudolph's stable service, who acted, on occasion, either as coachman or as body-servant to His Highness. His cousin, Conrad Bratfisch, was valet to the Archduke's personal secretary.

CHAPTER I

Concerning Myself and my Family — The Education of a Cosmopolitan—Feldkirch, Stonyhurst, the Sorbonne, Milan —The Making of a Democrat—Viennese Society and the Intellectuals—Kaiser Franz Josef and his Heir—A Constructive King—Bismarck and his Plans for Prussia—Rudolph's Popularity

IN attempting to tell the story of the last days of my unfortunate chief and patron, the Archduke Rudolph of Habsburg, as with an excusable enough pride he was wont to speak of himself in familiar and convivial company, it may be proper to set forth my claim to have filled so important a position as that of intimate personal secretary to His Highness, as well as right to explain who I am and how I came to be associated with the heir to the Austrian throne.

I intend to give of my family and its record, just such indications as will provide a warranty of their truthfulness for those who may reasonably be supposed to have had some knowledge of the social and political conditions of Europe in the years 1887, 1888 and 1889. Beyond this I cannot, for reasons which appear obvious, be expected to go. The rôle which myself played in the social drama of those years was, in view of my comparative youth and inexperience, more that of a spectator than an actor, as will duly be realised

in the course of this narrative. My story may, nevertheless, be taken to be the truth, and, as the initiated will not require to be told, I have written nothing which could not be fully substantiated if access might be obtained to the private archives of the imperial houses under consideration. The near future must, in any case, reveal the truth as I bear witness to it.

I am a cosmopolitan by lineage as well as by inclination, although the *souche* or stock of my family is undoubtedly Austro-German. The estate of my uncle—my dead father's eldest brother—was one of the most considerable in Carinthia, lying in the neighbourhood of Huttenberg. This uncle's second patrimony was situated to the north-west of Venetia, in Friuli, a region which considers itself, even to these days, Italian; indeed, it was a source of mild domestic unrest in my uncle's home that his wife, who belonged to the Orsini tribe, always affected to consider herself superior in point of origin to her Germanic husband, and admitted only one recommendation in his favour—namely, the fact that his mother had also been an Italian of the wealthy and newly ennobled Lombardini house. This lady's father had in his time married a lady of the distinguished house of Stapleton, in Yorkshire, a Catholic family, while another brother had married into the Benevento family, which was better known in France by the more illustrious name of Perigord. In the year 1887, when I was in my twenty-fifth year, I was kinsman to men

who were notables in Austria, in Italy, in England and in France. Add to this the further consideration that a Neapolitan princely relative of my aunt's Roman family, della Rocca by name, had married into the rich German-Jewish family of Heine, the well-known poet who resided for the most part in Paris, and it will be admitted that my pretensions to be a "kosmopolite," as we Teutons term it, are not ill founded. In the capitals of the countries just named I had intimate connections, and indeed may claim to have had both a home and a welcome in all of them.

My father died in Vienna, where, as a Court official, he resided, when I was ten years old, my mother following two years later, after which I was entrusted to the care of the best of uncles. I pass over the years of my early education, which was obtained at the school of Feldkirch; at the age of fifteen I was sent to England, and passed three years at the Jesuit College of Stonyhurst, in Lancashire; leaving there, I passed to London, where for two years I studied with a well-known tutor, the intention being that I should proceed to Oxford. The then Cardinal of Westminster, Monsignor Manning, a close friend of my English guardian, a Mr M. Stapleton, counselled, however, against my becoming an Oxford man, and this on the ground, as I was then informed, that residence at Oxford was certain to kill my religious beliefs. In due course I proceeded to Paris, where I entered as a student at the old Sorbonne; here I spent two years, becoming at the end of that

time a *licencié-ès-lettres* and being credited with speaking French unusually well. Languages I found easy of acquirement; English I spoke almost like a native; Italian I read and wrote like an educated Roman, so that when, in my twenty-first year, I proceeded to Milan, I soon attained great ease in speaking that language. I mention this gift of tongues for the reason, only, that it was the one which in due course drew towards me the attention of the Archduke Rudolph, himself an accomplished, if somewhat "guttural" linguist, a characteristic, by the way, which he shared with his lifelong friend, Prince Albert Edward of Wales. I left Milan, after a year's stay, in my twenty-third year, and proceeded to Vienna, where my uncle was passing the Court season, in the early summer of 1885.

My life in England, France and Italy had given my character so strong a predisposition towards what is—to Austrians at least—unaccountably called Bohemianism, that the somewhat strait-laced society of Vienna was hardly likely to accord with my tastes. By my cosmopolitan education, of a democratic turn of mind, I disliked any social system which refused even to men of eminent intellectual worth the *entrée* to its first coteries, except on terms of the barest sufferance and in a way which no self-respecting man could tolerate, once he had tested the temper of Viennese aristocracy towards all who had been born outside its narrow circle. In London and in Paris I had had ample opportunity of noting that great talent

practically led the great world of the time, and that the highly placed were really the instruments of its will and *œuvre*, no matter what the noble dispensers of hospitality may themselves have thought of relative positions in the matter. In Mayfair and in the Quartier St Germain there were, of course, houses in which the principle of "noble quarterings" still prevailed as the condition of acceptableness; but these coteries were, for the most part, of the dullest and most tasteless kind, and neither the real London nor the real Paris cared about their existence—in truth, rarely heard of them. Viennese society was, on the contrary, based wholly on the principle of "quarterings," and the attitude of a certain great English noble who once subjected Dr Johnson to the indignity of dining behind a screen, in order to conceal the poverty of the lexicographer's attire from fellow-guests, was practically that of noble Austrians towards distinguished commoners of all kinds.

An important result of this insane exclusiveness was that intellectual Vienna set about establishing its own social unit, equally exclusive and self-contained, and so there sprang into existence a kind of Separate Estate which, by maintaining an intriguing radicalism in its general attitude towards the imperial *régime*, became one of the fruitful factors in hastening the decay, not only of the monarchy, but also of Austria's political prestige in the eyes of Europe. It is true that Kaiser Franz was too practised a

statesman not to realise that his nobility was undermining its own stability as well as the dynasty of the Habsburgs. Himself he sought to neutralise this by affecting the Pauline attitude of being all things to all men—a pose from which he was constitutionally altogether averse, since the divine quality of popular sympathy has always been foreign to his nature. Added to this comes the fact that he is among the least intellectual of men, and although more than once deservedly described as the first gentleman in Europe, it is only in the social or imperial sense that he can be so regarded. What Voltaire, I think, speaks of as the born kindliness which springs from a sympathetic heart has been temperamentally denied to Francis Joseph. In him there is little of the real humanitarian, however much policy may dictate the semblance of that quality, and to my mind he represents a true type of the neo-pagan—a Roman Emperor in modern military uniform, with something of the ethical veneer of a Borgia cardinal: a man above malice, however, and one whose temperamental failings are due more to a native bloodless indifference than to any hardness of disposition.

Of an entirely different cast was my chief, the Archduke Rudolph. To what particular ancestor he owed his reversionary type would prove a highly speculative problem—to the Emperor Charles V., perhaps. That the gods had especially favoured him is, however, very certain, and it was the opinion of the most considerable men of

his day that he was of the stuff of constructive kings. To my mind he resembled no prince who has come within the scope of my observation so much as his friend, correspondent and political mentor, the Prince of Wales, who later became Edward VII. There was indeed a marvellous mental and psychical resemblance between the two heirs-apparent. Each possessed a profound personal fascination, an omnivorous interest in all things pertaining to human kind and human progress; each was in his real heart a man of the people, a lover of peace, and to both had been granted those gifts so rarely bestowed on princes—namely, the faculty of assimilating and grasping the spirit and actualities of the age into which they are born, as well as the intuition which senses its evolutionary process. In rulers who do not possess these gifts, the chief tendency is towards a decadent retrogression, or at least to a stagnant conservatism. The main constituent in the fascination and popularity of both Rudolph and Albert Edward was their active recognition that in the world of their day Democracy held the only cards worth holding, that Feudalism had passed beyond recall, that the final dispatch of Militarism was but a matter of years. Neither had required any Seer to read to him the portents of 1864, 1866 and 1870.

Bismarck, it may be remembered, was on one occasion frank enough to unveil his mind regarding the sincerity of Austria's attachment to the new conditions which gave Prussia the headship of

Germanic Europe. The astute Chancellor saw further than the diplomatic dullards of Berlin.

"Austria," he said in effect, "may forgive us, but can she forget?"

Would the reversionary heirs of the Cæsars permanently consent to abase themselves before the late boors of the Brandenburg Mark? It was certain that with Austria lay the decision for or against the Hohenzollerns, and Bismarck realised that the only hope for the dynasty he served so faithfully lay in crushing out all hope of an Austrian revival, all attempt to recapture her hereditary position as the arbitress of the Germanic Bond and its destinies in the world. For him, therefore, and his policies, no constructive kings outside Berlin.

Between Kaiser Franz and his heir Rudolph there subsisted a perfect affection—not so uncommon a phenomenon where the parental bond serves as the welding force of two antithetical natures. Unlike many other dynastic families, moreover, the family sense of the Habsburgs is a strongly developed trait. Kaiser Franz, it is well known, has few illusions about his intellectual limitations; nor was he at all ignorant or jealous of the commanding personal qualities of his heir, to whom, in truth, he looked to restore to the dynasty that prestige of which a succession of political and warlike mischances had robbed it since days dating as far back as Austerlitz and Wagram. The Emperor well knew that the Archduke was pre-eminently well equipped for that rôle of socio-political compromise for which

he himself felt he was, temperamentally considered, but poorly fitted. Indeed, it was an accepted axiom in Vienna in the eighties that the prematurely ageing Kaiser was freely willing to abdicate, in favour of his son, a throne to which he clung only from an overwhelming sense of duty to the honour of his House—a sentiment so transparently honest and so actively forceful in him that it has enabled him to retain his crown where any weaker monarch must have lost it beyond redemption for his race. And so it was that conditions ensued within the empire very similar to those which existed during the widowhood of Queen Victoria, when, socially speaking, the Heir-Apparent was King in all but title, the Archduke enacting a corresponding rôle in Austrian society.

Rudolph it invariably was who represented the Emperor in all social movements which were calculated to conciliate the self-isolated Separate Estate—a body which played within the empire the rôle of destructive critic of the existing *régime*. To its adherents Rudolph was not only acceptable on the ground of his known sympathy with democratic aspirations; he was also bound to them by the fact that his private purse had subsidised several publications, one of which was, indeed, owned and partly edited by himself. The Prince had, moreover, written several respectable books of travel and science, and among his closest friends were Austrian journalists and literary men of European note. It was publicly understood, and privately a matter

of knowledge, that Rudolph's own inclination was in favour of the strongest possible political relationship with England and Russia as the surest means of curbing Prussian ambitions; further, that he regarded the Triple Alliance as the outward expression of the policy which was not only reducing Austria to the condition of a vassal of Prussia, but which was also the means by which Bismarck assured her continued subjection. His private life, it was admitted, was hardly such as became the Heir-Apparent to a Most Catholic monarchy; his love affairs were legion, his sacrifices to Bacchus notorious, while his vast debts were the measure of his passion for gambling and dissipation of many varieties. Julius Cæsar, it might be recalled, had himself spent a vicious and dissipated youth. Subjects prefer, I think, that their future rulers shall have looked upon life in all its multi-coloured expressions. His life was a sign, moreover, that officious Vaticanism would count for little under Emperor Rudolph; and, in any case, he was still on the better side of thirty, with ample time for self-reform.

In Germanic countries of his time, Prince Bismarck, it is perhaps hardly necessary to state, towered, without danger of rivalry or comparison, above all men to whom Destiny had assigned a political or diplomatic rôle in the history of their own age, and it is not to be denied at this stage, one may suppose, that since the age of Napoleon, no such imperious personality had appeared in Europe to work the will of the Fates. The

Chancellor's own marvellous intuitions in matters of intrigue, as well as his sense of imposing portents, whether in men or in matters, were powerfully assisted by a network of espionage and secret service the like of which has been unknown since Hannibal prepared his titanic descent upon Consular Rome. And so it was that Bismarck well knew how widespread throughout political and intellectual Austria-Hungary was the hope that the House of Habsburg should at some undistant day re-enter into the chieftaincy of the Germanic Powers; was well aware with what scorn and contempt the Austrian nobles and the old territorial magnates looked upon the upstart House of Hohenzollern—a tribe which, even Bismarck himself conceded, was not superior in origin to his own ancient line of squirearchs; was acquainted by his secret informants that a common toast at every mess-table throughout the imperial army was expressed daily in the words: "To Rudolph, Emperor of Germany!"; that one of the first great diplomatists of his age—the then Prince of Wales—was entirely in sympathy with the Archduke's determination to detach Austria from the Triple Alliance; that, in fine, the Bismarckian system of Prussian domination in Europe was menaced by a real force in the person of the Crown Prince of Austria-Hungary, who was backed by the sympathies of the then brewing Triplice—Britain, France and Russia.

It is with this momentous political crux, and all it involved, that my narrative deals.

CHAPTER II

Fears of Austrian Landowners—I possess my Uncle's Confidence —Am appointed Imperial Messenger—Join Austrian Embassy in London—Oberon's Lincolnshire and Gamecock's National —I return to Vienna with the Archduke

It will be remembered that after the defeat of France in 1870, and the accession of Confederated Germany to the place which Austria had until that time held, many men foretold the approaching break up of the aggregation of countries over which the House of Habsburg ruled, prophesying at the same time a period of revolution within the Empire. It was not surprising, therefore, that some of the territorial magnates of the Dual Monarchy adopted about this time the policy of converting large portions of their estates into ready cash, most of which was transferred to England and there invested in public funds. A certain amount of secrecy was, of course, practised in these transfers, which involved the passing of vast tracts of land into the hands of new men, and in the case of my uncle's properties around Huttenberg and in the Trentino, the proviso was established that the rupture of entails should only be disclosed after his death; in the meantime the purchasers were to occupy their newly acquired demesnes as if in the capacity of tenants only. Possessing, as good fortune willed

it, my relative's entire confidence, I was chosen as the agent of some of his money transfers to London, where at that time Count Karolyi, our distant kinsman, was acting as Austrian Ambassador. Between the time of my arrival at Vienna in 1885, and the year 1887, owing to the kindness of my late father's friend, Count Joseph Hoyos, I had obtained a post in the Austrian Foreign Office in the capacity of Imperial Dispatch-carrier—what is also called King's Messenger—a busy enough office at the time, I may explain, since the affairs of the Triplice gave couriers plenty of movement passing between Berlin and Rome or wherever the German and Italian Courts and Ministers happened to be in residence. Incidentally, I may say, I was the bearer, on two occasions, of special communications from the Emperor to King Milan at Belgrade, and these I was commanded to deliver in person to the Servian monarch. Once again I presented a dispatch to Pope Leo XIII.

In the early months of 1887, Count Karolyi, in view of stress of work certain to arise out of the festivities connected with the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, solicited the Austrian Foreign Office for an additional secretary in London, at the same time suggesting my name as one who had been educated in England and knew its customs. This suggestion quite accorded with the financial transfer-operations which my uncle was then conducting, and so it was I found myself installed at the Embassy in London in March of the Jubilee

year. It had become, at that date, definitely known that the Archduke Rudolph was to represent his Imperial sire at the celebrations in honour of Queen Victoria's attainment of the fiftieth year of her epochal reign. For all my connection with official circles in Vienna, I had never yet been presented to the Archduke, though I had duly passed the dais at the Hofburg before Kaiser Franz. Indeed, I had only seen the Crown Prince twice in Vienna, and then had but the most fleeting view of him as he passed in the Prater, driving the famous phaeton and English blue roans with which the Kinsky stables never failed of supplying him. My first meeting with the Archduke was to come about in a manner that was far from ceremonious—indeed, somewhat laughably commonplace, since the agents of my presentation were, of all people in the world, the special detective department connected with Scotland Yard.

In the make-up of Prince Rudolph there was, I must state, a distinct symptom of a quality which the late King Edward once very happily, and within my own hearing, termed "Al-Raschidity." It was in full keeping with Rudolph's radical and popular ideas that he should love to move observingly among the masses as one of themselves, and in all possible circumstances unrecognised by them. A time came, however, in Vienna, in Budapest, in Paris and (I am told, for I have not visited Russia) in Petersburg, when the very cabmen, newsboys and policemen all came to

recognise the real quality of a very distinguished Herr Wittelsbach—his assumed name when intent on Raschidian adventure. To London he came frequently enough; not so much, I am certain, that he cared for London, if we except its fair women, as because here lived his temperamental and political affinity, the then Prince of Wales. The Archduke was, it will be remembered, a highly competent judge of horses and a speculator *acharné* on the chances of any animal which had won his fancy, also a frequent visitor to English and French race-courses, although I had it once, on the authority of his Chamberlain, Count Bombelles, who had especial means of knowing, that his racing balance, except in one year, was deep on the debit side. It was in connection with one of these periodical racing visits to England—the Grand National Steeplechase of 1887—that I came to be enlisted in his service.

The Austrian Embassy was housed in 1887 in Belgrave Square, where the staff of attachés were given what we usually termed "official room"—that is to say, rooms were at our disposal if we should choose to use them when not engaged on duty. It was invariably understood, however, that we should rent our own apartments in the neighbourhood of the Embassy. Mine, I well remember, were a very cosy set of rooms, not at all expensive, situated in Sloane Street and not far from the residence of Sir Charles Dilke, who had in those days won a considerable notoriety from some personal circumstances, which though

radical enough in their nature were not at all connected with the radical politics he so profoundly affected. Here I arrived one Thursday mid-evening towards the close of March, the day having been passed in dealing with certain political documents having an Austro-British ecclesiastical bearing, the remaining principals to the affair being several Roman prelates at the Archbishop's House in Westminster—always a tedious affair, since, in my experience, some bishops and monsignori are, as a rule, verbose and affected and as skittish as old virgins in treating with men and matters of the world. My servant, Conrad Bratfisch—a cousin, by the way, of that Bratfisch who served the Archduke Rudolph as head coachman and who was with him on his Highness's last visit to Meyerling—had just brought me a cup of coffee, as well as a batch of mail consisting of two letters from Vienna and another bearing a London postmark. This last letter interested me for one especial reason, and that was because, being largely dependent on my uncle, I was far from rich, and this particular envelope disclosed a cheque for a trifle over £2500. Its sender was a well-known betting agent called Fry, and I became possessed of this very opportune specie in the following way :—

One of the then Embassy's many visitors was a member of the Kinsky family, representatives of which excellent tribe were at that period well-known figures on the world's Turf. Our Kinsky, I must say, was in every way a most amiable fellow, had

professionally sponsored me on my arrival in London and been very obliging in other ways. As far as I remember, he had spent a couple of years at Oxford—it may, indeed, have been Cambridge—and, in any case, he was a whole-hearted amateur of the English idea in all its phases and forms. To myself, as well as to my colleagues in Belgrave Square, he had given the information that the then well-known Duchess of Montrose expected a horse—Oberon by name—to win under her colours in the Lincolnshire Handicap. The lady was very much alone in her belief apparently, for the longest odds were quoted against her champion. Kinsky, who frequently tiffined with me, was insistent, however, that this particular *tuyau* was the lineal heir of all the accumulated certainties which had ever won since horse was shod with racing-plates. An amusing youth, with a talent for argot of all kinds, he counselled me, in short, to put my penultimate shirt on Oberon. Happening in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross a few days before the Handicap was run, I called on Mr Fry's agent and placed a fifty-pound note on Oberon at odds of fifty to one. No wonder, then, at my interest in the letter which brought me this pleasant slice of luck, as the English term it. I was setting about the perusal of the remaining letters when unexpectedly the door opened and Bratfisch announced :

"His Excellency, the Ambassador, sir," and my chief, Count Karolyi, entered on the heels of the servant.

This visit was, of course, wholly informal, if you like, even in the case of a relative, and my looks did not disguise the astonishment I felt.

"My dear boy," the Ambassador explained, in his official yet *camarade* way, "you did not, of course, expect me; but I want your services, and at once. Rudolph, Scotland Yard has just informed me, is in England, and with Arthur Potocki; they arrived yesterday for this great steeplechase at Liverpool, where our country is represented by a horse belonging to Count Erdody. They are quite unattended, and in these days of Anarchist movement, this must not be. How the Vienna police should have failed to notify us passes my understanding. In any case, you must proceed at once to Liverpool, where you will notify the Chief Constable, and remain with the Archduke until he returns to London. You have ample time to catch the night mail to Crewe; if not, you must take a special. You will find our Prince incognito at the Adelphi Hotel."

This was, of course, unexpected; but nevertheless I managed to catch the second night mail at Euston, and arrived in Liverpool an hour after midnight, engaging rooms at the Adelphi. In this noted rendezvous of sportsmen the night was, for the great carnival, at least, still young, and the public rooms were all crowded. One might have expected the heir to an Imperial crown to have retired to rest by three o'clock in the morning. This was not Rudolph's happy way, however, and among the vigilants at that early hour none

was more alert than himself. Men I noted in the crowd who were as well known at Baden and Homburg as on English race-courses—owners, patrician and plebeian, trainers, jockeys, bookmakers and professional backers. My card was duly conveyed to Arthur Potocki, with whom I possessed but a shadowy acquaintance. He well understood the purport of my presence, he said, and fully appreciated the solicitude of Vienna's representative in London. Under the circumstances, however, he could not yet mention my arrival to the Crown Prince, but would do so on the morrow, when I should probably be presented —all of which took place in due course.

The Archduke Rudolph was unaffected amiability itself to all on whom his eye lighted gladly, and from the moment he gave me his hand I became bound to him by a devotion that might, for its sincerity, have sprung from a generation of intimacy. With his Imperial father there was, of course, all the gentle courtesy of the prince trained to kingly attitudes and forms. A close observer could not, however, fail to note that all his interest passed with the superficial smile that welcomed the stranger at the Imperial dais, and rare indeed was the being whose personality touched an answering chord of interest in the heart of that self-centred old monarch. With the Archduke, who disguised neither his first-sight likes nor dislikes, all who pleased him were made to feel at once and at all times welcome to his presence. He was at this time in his twenty-

ninth year; in height about five feet nine inches; eyes of a bright blue, complexion high-coloured, nut-brown hair, of a carriage distinctly imposing, yet with a tendency towards that embonpoint which also characterised Albert Edward. His voice was, as I have said, somewhat guttural, baritone, and very pleasant to hear; his gestures of a quick French rather than the heavy Teutonic emphasis; altogether he resembled a gentleman of the French type, although a marked heaviness of feature, accentuated by the historic Austrian lip, told the story of his Habsburg origin.

The Liverpool Grand National Steeplechase of 1887 marks itself in my mind, first because the Austrian-owned horse, Too Good, failed to win a large stake for the Archduke Rudolph; secondly, because my own modest run of winning luck declared itself in a highly capricious way. The great race, I remember, was won by a steeplechaser bearing the name Gamecock, and, if my memory serves, a French horse was second. On leaving London I had folded in my pocket-book some bank-notes totalling perhaps £100, and these soon passed into the possession of professional layers in the Ring, for, like my countrymen, I had placed my trust in Count Erdody's horse and, indeed, was so entirely a loser on the day's transactions that when our representative was beaten for the big race I found myself with but a few gold pieces in my purse. Coincidently enough, there was entered on that day, in one of the minor races, a horse bearing the name Prince Rudolph.



THE ARCHDUKE RUDOLPH, AGED 24, 1882.

What chance it stood of winning, I did not, of course, know, for, in truth, I had never even heard of the animal's existence. Yet the idea came to me, as such inspirations will come to betting men, that this animal would win—more particularly, too, because I was at the end of my funds. And then it suddenly flashed upon me that I was still in possession of my cheque for an odd £2500. I confided my difficulty to Arthur Potocki, and he, an inveterate and superstitious gambler, advised me to explain the affair to the well-known bookmaker, Mr Davis, who at once recognised his fellow-penciller's cheque and credited me with its value. Strong in my inspiration, I ventured the entire amount on the horse of my fancy; judging, too, by Potocki's somewhat protracted conversation with Davis—who, I may say, was under no illusion whatever as to the quality of Herr Wittelsbach—he also invested upon the horse for both the Archduke and himself, and when the horse was returned a winner, and I saw my cheque multiplied in value by three, I also noted an unusual satisfaction on the faces of my distinguished countrymen. In Vienna, some months later, I learned that the Archduke's separate winnings on the horse Prince Rudolph[1] totalled nearly £25,000.

Like most men of the world, Rudolph liked a winner, whether in horse or human flesh, and the result of this day's speculation was that I entered

[1] The records give the age of this horse as six years. It was trained by L'Anson and ridden by the late Mr "Abington" Baird.—EDITOR.

into the especial favour of the Crown Prince, who was, moreover, particularly pleased with my fluency in both English and French. Count Karolyi relinquished my services at the Prince's behest, and I returned with His Highness and Arthur Potocki to Vienna, where I was installed as personal private secretary to the Crown Prince.

My life thereafter began under new and splendid conditions in the capital of Austria-Hungary.

CHAPTER III

Secretary to the Archduke Rudolph—His Fascinating Personality and Ability—Our Visit to Berlin—A Future King and a Future Kaiser—Prince William of Prussia and his Clique—The Pan-German Idea—Berlin's Fear of Rudolph's Popularity and Prestige

ALMOST from the first days of my appointment to the service of the Archduke, I entered upon terms of the most confidential intimacy with him. Indeed, the sincerity of my devotion must have been entirely obvious to one of his acute sensibility in such matters, and I can now truthfully declare that no person has ever won from me anything like the affection which Rudolph's personality from the first fairly commanded. My position with regard to himself imposed upon me a very strict line of conduct in respect of all outside matters and personages—that is to say, I became a kind of *alter ego* of my master, belonged to, worked for and lived for him alone, coming, almost, to regard my own personality as one which had ceased to exist. His correspondence became my own charge, his friendships were my friendships, his sympathies and antipathies my sympathies and antipathies, his objects in existence my objects in existence—in short, his will became my will. That such a total self-effacement argued something of a negative personality on

my own part, I am freely willing to admit. Over the long stretch of years I now explain it to myself only on the ground that my devotion to the Prince transcended every other sentiment of which I was capable, and I remember that the late Lord Suffield, in my hearing, explained the unexampled devotion of the late Mr Christopher Sykes to Prince Albert Edward on precisely the same grounds. Love, ambition, pleasure, the pursuit of a grand career, even family affections—all these I was willing to forgo and sacrifice, had he demanded so much from me.

I feel bound to explain, however, that the glamour of his Imperial position counted for little in this complete self-surrender, as against the compelling attraction of his personality, since for many generations members of my family had served at the steps of the Austrian and other European thrones. So dominant was this personal magnetism in the Crown Prince, in all circles in which he moved, that I often doubt if Napoleon exercised a more imperious fascination or influence on the men who followed his prodigious fortunes. Nor was this all-compelling mastery of the circumstances of the moment confined to his own country and countrymen. In Berlin, in Paris, in London, in Rome, even the leaders risen from the people bowed before his native supremacy and talent and admitted the presence of what is nowadays termed a Superman. In that admirable work entitled *The Last Phase* I remember to have read the opinion of its author that Napoleon had

been "wrecked by the extravagance of his own genius." To institute any comparison between the great self-made prince and the Heir of the Habsburgs is not, be assured, my intention. Nevertheless, these words often recur to me when I think upon the tragedy which removed Rudolph from the world. His commanding ability had even then, in his untried age, been sufficiently apparent to awaken the fear and envy of men who feared that in Rudolph had arrived the long-foretold statesman-prince who was to restore to the Habsburgs the prestige of their ancient crown —the restoration of real Germany. And to-day I am more than ever convinced that he was lost to Austria at a crisis of her Imperial fortunes.

In April, 1887, it will be remembered, the old Emperor William I. had made a partial recovery from one of the many illnesses attendant on the senile decay into which he had already fallen, and even then it was a matter of general knowledge that the number of the days remaining to his heir, Frederick William, was also cast. The Prince of Wales was in Berlin in the spring of that year, and when, as the deputy of Kaiser Franz, the Archduke Rudolph proceeded to the Prussian capital, in order to offer congratulations to the reigning Emperor on his recovery, I accompanied him, I was in due course presented to the English Heir-Apparent and for the first time met the Prince who was afterwards to play so histrionic a rôle on the theatre of European history under the title of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

The then Prince William of Prussia—Bismarck's rather sorry attempt to popularise him as Prince "Bill" never, I may say, got the distance, as racing men put it—was a year younger than Rudolph, and already, to even untrained observers, gave evidence of that capricious quest for notoriety which, far more than any real ability, enabled him subsequently to impose his very shallow personality on an age which history will probably call the most superficial and barren on record. The personal relations subsisting between the then Prince William of Prussia and the Crown Prince of Austria were publicly supposed at the time to have been very cordial in their nature; a supposition which, I can say, was entirely a wrong one, for I doubt if, in the record of the world's heirs-apparent, two princes were more assuredly born to prove antipathetic the one to the other. On the Habsburg side you had the perfect man of the world, intensely popular, highly intellectual, sympathetic, with no pretensions to a godliness which he did not feel, to virtues which he did not practise, or to talents which he did not possess; a man whose arrival in any capital of the world was always a source of interest and pleasure to the spirits who led the time. For all that, a prince fallen from high estate and shadowed by the tragedy of 1866.

On the other hand was the representative of the conquering House of Hohenzollern: Prince William was a young man whose only apparent gift had been the ability to recognise that great

or popular talents had been denied him. He had, therefore, every observer could see, studied out a pose in life which was wholly a contradiction to an essentially plebeian and commonplace nature. This pose—much copied in many circles—has long since made the tour of the world labelled with the apology that it is the expression of the "artistic temperament," and has not infrequently made the fortune of charlatan exponents who impose on credulous dullards incapable of seeing beneath its inane trickeries. It is based mainly on the cultivation of unfelt enthusiasms; its chief outward expression is a forced animation of feature and manner, an affected capacity for discerning the wonderful where there is nothing but the commonplace; a fidgety vivacity which at times touches on the convulsive; much loudness of speech and a laboured incisiveness in conversation about nothing which requires incision; a derisive view, on the charge of "philistinism," of all ordinary conventions which must eternally remain the conditions of sane social life and intercourse; a copiousness of gesticulation and emphasis where neither is expected; above all, the perennial glorification of totally unfelt feelings for everything that represents the objects of its enthusiasms, whatever these may be. Over the long decades I remember this earliest pose of Prince William of Prussia, and how its first ebullitions affronted and antagonised princes and noblemen who, socially speaking, were satisfied to be gentlemen

before anything else. This was the Prince, then, who represented aggressive Prussianism, strong in its triumphs of 1864, 1866, 1870.

My master, Rudolph, could not have been termed, I must say, a handsome man, in the strict sense of that expression; he was, nevertheless, a prince of the utmost personal distinction, and a proof thereof lay in the fact that he looked more imperial in private dress than in military uniform or regalia. The Prussian heir-presumptive was, on the contrary, always in military *tenue*, while his countenance, even in society, much affected the *Drohblick*[1] with which all German officers are instructed by the military code to becloud their sulky faces. I have often, during my frequent sojourns in Berlin, heard visitors remark upon the entire lack of distinction or nobleness in Prince William, and have myself often wondered that so plebeian a creature could have sprung from the loins of a sire who was truly of the heroic type. I have, indeed, seen no prince so unfavourably compare with royal and imperial congeners as Prince William, and on one occasion, at a Hofburg levee, when the Prince of Wales, the Archduke Rudolph and the Prussian Prince, formed a trio apart, I heard my kinsman, the old Duc de Valençay (Sagan), make a perhaps not very original, but, under the circumstances,

[1] The Diarist leaves this word untranslated, and we know no English equivalent. The American term, "to give one the steel eye," comes near enough. The direct rendering is "threatening look."—EDITOR.

apposite enough, remark, with reference to the awkward yet pretentious attitudes of Frederick's heir: "Voilà un triangle dont un angle est bien obtus."

The attitude of the Prussian heir-presumptive towards other princes of those days was one the like of which I have never seen equalled for its intermittent phases of affected modesty and vulgar arrogance, just as his moods varied, and at the same time for its strange mixture of *mauvaise honte* and self-assertiveness. Somewhere in Scott I have read that there is nothing more ridiculous than a pose of social boldness adopted by a bashful man, and this was largely the impression which Prince William's attitude and demeanour conveyed to those who observed him in the days when he was heir-presumptive to the crown of the Hohenzollerns. Of all the Princes of the Blood in Europe, he was certainly, in 1887, one of the least popular and least impressive, while even his attempts to please were always marked with a boorish condescension which more than one gentleman of my acquaintance made no pretence whatever at resenting.

Much had been written in those days of the favour with which fair women looked upon him. There was, nevertheless, no truth whatever in the many stories told of his successes as a Lovelace; and in Vienna, which, owing to the establishment of the Triple Alliance, was at that time socially very much in touch with Berlin, it was well known for a fact that any success of this sort would have

been impossible, since nature, which had been unkind to the Prince in the matter of the withered arm, had hardly been more liberal in other respects, and even in the venal *coulisses* and green-rooms of Berlin theatres, the mention of his name always evoked from notorious women a recollective simper suggestive of a pity which was far from akin to love. It was a well-known fact, too, that in his earlier days his body servants were chosen from one of the several institutes for afflicted dumb males in Posen, mostly Poles who, even had they been able to speak, would have found some difficulty in regaling Berliners with the real facts concerning the royal and imperial torso.[1] In any other circumstances I should long hesitate to touch upon such particulars; but in the case of one who, events have proved, aspires, of his masculinity, to rule the world, one may be pardoned the reflection that all world conquerors of the genuine breed were men who embodied in the highest degree the principle of the sound mind in the sound frame—notably, Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Napoleon, each of whom was of a more or less formidable athletic mould.

In reality, the average public in any country are as children, and, fondly or stupidly, believe that kings and princes, who outwardly treat each other with elaborate courtesies, are bound to one

[1] Mr Price Collier, in his *Germany and the Germans*, alludes to the physical condition of Kaiser Wilhelm when he says, in effect, that no official has ever seen the Emperor *in puris naturalibus* and been allowed to retain his post.—EDITOR.

another by ties of the most exquisite brotherliness and friendship. The natives of my own Austria are no exception to the rule, and just as in Berlin, where even newspapers of repute were wont to build fantastic political air-castles based on the "loving friendship" that subsisted between Prince William of Prussia and the Archduke Rudolph, so too our popular Viennese organs of the eighties often indulged themselves and their readers with golden fairy tales about Rudolph's personal regard for the Prussian heir-presumptive, as he was known until the death of the old Emperor William, in 1888. So far from this being the fact, it is doubtful if, at any time before I entered the service of the Archduke, there was a single point of favourable personal contact open to these two princes who, as I have said, were at that time about the same age, my master being by one year the senior of the twain. It is certain, in any case, that, for my own part, and I can answer for the intimates of the Archduke, such as Count Potocki, Hoyos, Teleki, Bombelles, Wielen, no suggestion was ever made of a visit to any capital that should bring the two Imperial heirs together which did not fill us with some kind of alarm; and as, moreover, much of the personal diplomatic business between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin was executed on behalf of Kaiser Franz by his son Rudolph, it so happened that the meetings of my master with the Prussian Prince became matters of considerable, as well as, to his Highness and ourselves, unfortunate frequency.

Unluckily, too, about this time, Prince William, having reached that stage of self-knowledge which the French describe by the term *conscience de soi*, was quietly sizing up the situation as regards his immediate personal prospects. It was well known to us in Austria that the Hohenzollern family, after our unfortunate adventure which culminated at Sadowa in 1866, definitely regarded themselves as the divinely appointed successors to that position in Central Europe which had been held by the Habsburgs until the opening of the nineteenth century, and which they voluntarily abdicated in the days of the all-conquering Napoleon, when they ceased to call themselves the chiefs of the Holy Roman Empire. Nor did the Prussians confine their ambitions merely to the custodianship of all that was territorially and politically involved in the idea of Pan-Germanism, of which principle we have heard so much within the past generation; more particularly since the fall of Bismarck and the advent to power in Germany of that band of political gamblers whom anti-Prussian Austrians were wont sometimes to term the Mommsenite School. Students of history will not require to be told that the Pan-German mirage was not at all unknown in Berlin in the days of Frederick the Great, and that after the fall of Napoleon the statesman Hardenberg had once fondly dreamed of a reconstruction of the Central Germanic powers based upon that principle and, of course, at the expense of Austria-Hungary. On the whole, it appears now pretty

clear to me that, however much Prince Bismarck may have sought to humiliate and enfeeble Austria, he had never seriously conceived a Pan-Germanic Empire governed from Berlin; had this been his ambition, there was little to prevent a realisation of the dream when Prussia defeated our forces in Bohemia in 1866, and even Austrians were astonished at the moderation displayed by their Prussian conquerors as a result of that last Austro-Prussian conflict.

The modern revival of Pan-Germanic notions was due rather to the militaristic band of homunculi with whom Prince William of Prussia had as early as 1887 consented to drink Brüderschaft.[1] My master the Archduke was as well informed as any man in Austria, and personally knew many of this band of brothers by whom Prince William had already surrounded himself, and the names of many of whom, I may add, subsequently appeared among the members of the Camarilla which the journalist Harden exposed in 1907. That their main objects included the breaking up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the reduction of the chiefs of the Habsburgs to the condition of minor princes was equally well known to us, and it was with the object of defeating the aims of the "Mommsenite" brotherhood that, from the early eighties, the Archduke Rudolph had begun

[1] The Diarist does not translate this word. The act of "drinking Brüderschaft, or Brothership" among Germans is a kind of social confirmation-rite by which the principals swear to stand by each other in all possible circumstances and at all times throughout their lives.—EDITOR.

to exert his overwhelming influence throughout Austria-Hungary to the end that a strong political national party should come into being, having for its principle an Austrian national revival based largely on popular or democratic ideas.[1]

It was not, of course, to be imagined that either this programme or the source of its influence and inspiration could long remain unknown to the omniscient and all-observing Bismarck, whose agents and spies abounded throughout Austrian dominions, at this time, in numbers greater, if anything, than those of 1866. The firm grasp which Rudolph held on the sympathies of all popular parties in his vast heirship was seen at once to constitute a grave menace to the plans of Bismarck as regards Prussian hegemony in Central Europe, as well as to the militaristic ambitions of Prince William of Prussia and his school of sycophants and politicasters.

Here, I admit, I seem to be guilty of a contradiction. I have said above that, in my opinion, Bismarck entertained no serious Pan-German dreams. In my own view, they were foreign to his ambitions for his country; nevertheless, it was his often-expressed view that political stress, combined with the westward movement of Russia, must eventually drive Austria into confederation with North Germany, entailing her submission to Prussia as the head of the Germanic Bond. This

[1] Austro-Hungarian elections of these days certainly bear out the statement of the Diarist as to a national revival on popular lines.—EDITOR.

course would have coincided fully with his hopes for Prussia, and so the new popular movement in Austria, as well as the political aptitudes of Rudolph, constituted a menace to the Prussia of his ideals.

I think I have here clearly shown how and why the Archduke Rudolph and Prince William of Prussia were fated to be naturally antagonistic to each other. Nor were their antipathies based solely on political ideas or contingencies. As I shall show in the course of this narrative, the superiority of the Austrian both as a man and a statesman constituted a source of sore jealousy above which William of Hohenzollern was totally unable to raise his narrow and envious mind.

CHAPTER IV

The Prussian Royal Family—Intrigues respecting the Succession—The Crown Prince's Malady—The Crown Princess Victoria—The Heir-Presumptive's Attitudes—Albert Edward and Rudolph—A Curious Wager—Rudolph's Opinion of Albert Edward—Albert Edward's Complaint of the Press

ALREADY, in 1887, the Crown Prince Frederick was under no illusions as to the real nature of that disease which was in so short a period to put a term to his earthly career. The sombre vigils of San Remo had not yet begun; but, if my recollection serves me, several operations had already been performed for the removal of cancerous growths at the root of the tongue. Doctor Mackenzie had as yet not been summoned to Berlin, but the visits paid to the Prussian capital in the spring and early summer of 1887 by the Prince of Wales had more to do with the contingency of the English surgeon's being eventually summoned, than, as was commonly supposed at the time, with the personal presentation of invitations to the Imperial princes to attend the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, by the English heir-apparent. It is no exaggeration for me to say, and the fact was already well known in Vienna, that the diseased body of the Crown Prince Frederick had by then become the central point around which raged one of the most cold-blooded

and tragic intrigues of which history has any record. I state the reasons for this assertion:

In the first place, the passing of the old Emperor William—virtually, during Bismarck's lengthy domination, an amiable and picturesque nonentity—was well known to be a matter of, at the most, a twelvemonth. The aged monarch fully realised that his son's illness was of the gravest nature. It was freely said in Vienna, as well as in Berlin, that old William I. had seriously listened to the suggestions put forward by Prince William of Prussia, and also by elderly members of his Court, whose sons were intimates of the Prussian heir-presumptive, that he should counsel Frederick to abdicate in favour of Prince William himself, whose youthful energies were, it was urged, better fitted to meet the political difficulties attendant on the growing aggressive movement of the Social Democrats. As regards this position, no one outside the most intimate Court circles in Berlin could pretend to certain knowledge. Even my master the Archduke's knowledge was derived only from second-hand sources; these sources were, as a rule, however, very reliable, for, as a result of the strong anti-Catholic policies pursued in Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*, there had grown up among the old Catholic territorial nobles in Prussia a body which was distinctly predisposed towards Catholic Austria, and it was from important members of this body that the Archduke had learned of Prince William's endeavour to procure his father's abdication in his own favour.

In the second place, there existed a strong division of opinion among physicians in Berlin as to the assumption that Frederick's malady was of an entirely incurable nature. Many held that his magnificent bodily strength was capable of enabling him to undergo the strain of a series of operations for excision during many years—a point of view which alarmed those who desired to see the militaristic Prince William on the throne, his father being notoriously a lover of peace, an admirer of England and altogether, as a soldier of well-tried experience, averse from the bloody adventure of a war of aggrandisement. A remarkable situation arose, as a consequence, among the prominent medical practitioners in the Prussian capital. On the one hand were those who came to be known as courtier-physicians, men for the most part who placed their own personal advancement, professional and social, before any consideration of loyal devotion to the doomed heir to the throne. Sinister influences, working in infamous secrecy, were undoubtedly operating on the petty vanities and ambitions of these venal creatures. On the other hand were men of unquestioned integrity and tried experience and ability, who placed their professional honour and talents at the service of the afflicted Prince, supported by the finest loyalty. To some considerable degree, too, the political and social world became affected—that is to say, in Berlin of 1887 there were those who desired to see a lengthy reign of an Emperor Frederick for all the fruitful

prospects it promised; but also there were many who, foresensing the spectacular and histrionic reign of an Emperor William II., with all its exploitable possibilities, cared not how soon the actual Crown Prince should be—removed, if necessary.

Another reason may be looked for in the political abilities of the Consort of the Crown Prince Frederick, the Princess Victoria (*dite* Royal, in England), eldest sister of the Prince of Wales. Even those who were associated in a minor capacity in diplomatic affairs may recollect that it was a commonplace of chancelleries and political *salons* that the intervention in State matters, in those days, of either the Crown Princess Victoria, or the Danish-born Tsaritza, always resulted in important diplomatic moves and combinations. It is matter of too much note, indeed, to recall the fact that Bismarck, a firm hater of the political petticoat, to use his own exquisite phrase, dreaded the invisible hand of the Englaenderin, as he called the Princess and had her called in his Press. And as Prince William had served articles in the Friederichstrasze in the days when the Chancellor called the tunes of Diplomacy from the Tagus to the Niemen, it is certain, too, that the Emperor-to-be had drunk deeply at the fountain of his old Mentor's misogynism; for, in truth, he hated his royal and imperial mother with a fervour that might well have burned in the heart of the last of the imperial Cæsars.

Towards the sire, Frederick, the attitudes and

airs of Prince William were those of poorly enacted toleration and contempt, which lost much of their effect, however, owing to the almost ridiculous physical contrast between the two princes—on the one hand, Frederick, a man truly regal in every aspect of his splendid person; on the other, William, a tailor-made *poseur*, under whose inevitable military redingote trained observation easily divined the padded half-shoulder, the wadded breast, the helpless arm, and noted the barrelled nether limbs which bespeak the type that shall never learn the manful arts of horsemanship. No one could, of course, and for a certainty, say what the nature of the personal relations subsisting between father and son really were; but as far as my observation allowed me to divine—and I witnessed their intercourse in Berlin, again during the Jubilee of Victoria, in London, and subsequently, too, at San Remo—I am certain that they were always of that sort in which a laboured courtesy and self-restraint on the part of both actors provide the measure of an elemental antipathy that is no more to be overcome on either side than would be the action of mutually repellent metals.

Nor did Prince William forgo any opportunity that ever presented itself of showing publicly the superior esteem which he affected to feel for his grandfather—I say affected, for it is doubtful if into the shallow heart and mind of that self-centred prince a gleam of anything like real discrimination of a considerate kind ever penetrated in regard to

any human being but himself. Had the opposite been the case, there can be little doubt that the real superiority of the Heir-Apparent as a man and a prince—for in those days there was only one ruling statesman in Prussia, Bismarck—must have been most obviously apparent to him, as against the entirely negative personality of William I., who, to the very end, was as a docile Abiturient [1] in the hands of the masterful Chancellor. At this moment, indeed, and in view of the history of the past two years in particular, I feel certain that history will record the removal of the Crown Prince Frederick from an active rôle on the theatre of European politics as the most disastrous blow dealt to the House of Hohenzollern since that family succeeded in forcing itself upon an unwilling hemicycle of time-honoured dynasties.

It was undoubtedly a fact, and herein I may claim to speak from positive knowledge, since I was the sole custodian of my master's correspondence, that the arrival of the Prince of Wales at Berlin in the spring of 1887 followed an unusually lengthy exchange of personal communications between the English Prince and the Archduke Rudolph.[2] Such communications were not always entrusted to the ordinary mails, I may say, and

[1] We have in English no equivalent for the term Abiturient, which really means a high-school student who is about to proceed for his Matriculation.—EDITOR.

[2] This fact I afterwards ascertained, when sorting and re-arranging the Archduke's correspondence. The English Prince was already in Berlin in March 1887.—DIARIST.

the reason for this was that Berlin's "letter-breakers" did not confine their operations to their own capital or country, but operated through secret-service agents all over the Continent and in England—in Vienna as busily as elsewhere. The Archduke, for instance, subsequently made use of my own services on several occasions to convey a single letter to Marlborough House or to Sandringham, as to the nature of the contents of which I knew nothing, of course, but which must have been of considerable moment, to necessitate so much precaution for its transmission. My master invariably entrusted ultra-confidential communications of this kind to the very amiable and good-looking Sigismund Rokososki, the Cracovian Pole, whom a large number of Londoners and Parisians of that day will not fail to remember, or else to his cousin Stanislas, of the same hospitable tribe.

At all events, the meeting of the Heir-Apparent to the English throne and the Crown Prince Rudolph, which took place at Berlin, soon after the Liverpool adventure of which I have told, was one which had clearly been prepared *de longue main*, as they say. The Crown Princess Victoria may be trusted to have been well informed as to the nature of the intrigues which were at work with the object of keeping the succession from her husband, by hook or crook, and to have informed her royal brother of its sinister scope and extent. It is doubtful, however, if her exalted rank would have permitted of such friendships among

important personages of the Court as might have enabled her to learn the full extent of the machinations operating against herself and the Crown Prince, even if she had been a popular Princess in Prussia, which she very certainly was not. And in any case, the vital political interests at stake concerned the future of Austria much more than that of England, as far as the most keen-sighted might at that time have been expected to see; though, in the light of latter-day history—more particularly since the days of the Boer War—it is now easy to divine that among all the great Powers, England was the nation which, even in those far-distant days, was especially *visée* by the militaristic spirits at Berlin, then laying their plans to capture nothing less than the mastery of Europe. So that when the Archduke informed me at Berlin, in the spring of 1887, that the meeting between himself and Albert Edward had been mutually arranged in order to discuss the political situation arising out of the dynastic conditions in Prussia, I immediately decided to make it my business to amplify as far as possible all sources of information which might serve the interests of the Archduke. In the course of this visit I had the honour of being presented to Prince Albert Edward.

Of this Prince so much has been written that, coming from a foreigner, anything additional might be looked upon by Englishmen as somewhat in the nature of an impertinence. Nevertheless, it is my decided conviction that English statesmen,

courtiers and others with whom he consorted have not paid anything like a tithe of justice to a man whom thoughtful history will find itself bound to call one of the ablest of English monarchs. Whether it is that the men who composed his familiar circle, being mostly men of action, found (or find) themselves unequal to the task of presenting a true picture of Edward, I know not; but certain it is to myself, and to friends of mine who were also privileged to meet the Prince on something like terms of respectful familiarity, no extant description of him tallies with the personality I first knew as the Prince of Wales and afterwards met as King Edward VII. Or perhaps it may have been that, accomplished cosmopolitan as he was, the Prince unveiled his real self only rarely to the prominent and somewhat insular Englishmen who formed his set.

Indeed, I have often thought that the favour which certain Jewish notabilities won from him was due in a great measure to the fact that they were not only of a cosmopolitan cast themselves, but that their houses were also the rendezvous of the most distinguished cosmopolitans of their time. One has only to translate the word cosmopolitan to find that it means man-of-the-world in the real sense of that expression; and this character above all was salient in the personality of England's great Prince; so that on putting the term in juxtaposition with that other characteristic of insularity which, even in these international days, remains the boast of Englishmen, one arrives at



Photograph: W. & D. Downey.

something like an explanation of the reason why his immediate circle failed in a large measure to understand him in such a way as to present him in those fine traits which most charmed, as well as commended him to, the great Continental notabilities of his age. With regard to the Prince, I may here recall that on the occasion of a reception given by Sir Augustus Paget, then Ambassador in Vienna, our Kinsky, on a visit from London, in the capital, and whom I have previously mentioned in connection with Oberon, the Lincolnshire Handicap winner, approached me, during the Imperial quadrilles, with the following somewhat extraordinary proposition:

"I will make the following bet with you," he said, "since you are open to a gamble. You will observe that the British secretaries and attachés are represented in force to-night. Let us see: there are seven of them present. A thousand crowns to two hundred, that if I ask six of them what constitutes the chief reason for the popularity of the Prince of Wales, five will find themselves unable to answer me in a sentence which does not contain the word *tact* or *tactful*. Is it a bet?"

I was interested enough to accept this peculiar wager, which I was also forced subsequently to liquidate, for Kinsky won, as he had prophesied, five of the questioned six having fallen for the fateful word. Subsequently I regaled the Archduke at first-breakfast with an account of this harmless speculation, which I was certain could not fail to amuse him. We were, I recollect, in

temporary residence at Laxenburg—where my master first saw the light of day, I may say—and my story of this bet interested him so much that he declared his intention of informing the English Prince by letter. And then he added:

"No, it is not altogether tact with the Prince of Wales. I think he is too irascible to be very tactful. Situations are so definitely laid out for men in our position that it is only the veriest blunderers or the ill-intentioned who fail to be tactful. He has always been my good friend, and I understand him. His qualities go far deeper than tact, which is a surface talent, and on the whole I should say that Princes of the Blood who are lauded as being tactful are simply gentlemen and act as such—nothing more, nothing less."

After a pause he added reflectively: "Do you know, those Americans have an expression which exactly explains popularity such as that of the Prince of Wales. Out there they would call him 'a prince,' and in America to say of any man that 'he is a prince' is to confer upon him a social distinction beside which the Fleece would seem, in his opinion, cheap and ridiculous. It means, of course, that in all circumstances, and at all times, his heart will be found to be in the right place, and in the case of our Prince, the title would most fittingly apply. Nevertheless, it is a feeble enough compliment to pay to a man whose main title to the consideration of his age is the fact that he represents the best type of prince who holds that all things pertaining to humanity

should also be matters of interest to himself. What is the phrase, '*nil humani a me alienum puto*'—Horace was it not? And believe me, those monarchs of the future who wish to hold their thrones will have to build their policies largely on all that is implied in that seemingly trifling bit of philosophy. It has guided myself not less surely than Albert Edward, and the proof remains in the fact that both of us are more popular with the middle and democratic classes in our countries than we are with the hereditary families, whose outlook is essentially feudalistic and totally anti-democratic. You know this yourself."

In the sequel we were, however, to hear more of Kinsky's interesting bet, for during the celebrations held in connection with Queen Victoria's Jubilee, the Archduke, on the occasion of a man's-party at Marlborough House, related the story to his royal host, who received it with that somewhat phlegmatic good-humour that socially characterised him, but was clearly enough not surprised by it.

"I am myself," the English Heir-Apparent explained, "rather wearied with the chronic application of that term to my modest performances in public and elsewhere. I have no very clear notion in what the quality of tact really consists, and so I once asked Sykes if he could enlighten me. Sykes put on a profoundly intellectual look and thought very hard for some minutes; then he gave it as his opinion that a tactful person was one who always did the right

thing. This did not quite satisfy me, and I inquired if he thought the term had any moral or intellectual application. He replied that in his view the term was purely social in the sense in which it was used, that it involved only social talent and had nothing to do with morality or intellect or anything else—which, as I took care to tell Sykes, was rather a tactless explanation on his part, and so I gave up my quest for enlightenment. But I really wish the newspaper writers would give me a clearer indication of what they think of me, or what is thought of me; indeed, I am of opinion that the popular papers are always most foolish when they deal personally with the royal family, and what they think pleasing is in most cases the reverse of pleasing to the objects of their flattering paragraphs."

A remark which I think still applies.

After which, I recollect, the conversation turned on the political importance of great international dailies, a subject in which my master was completely informed, for not only was he the owner and part editor of several papers at home, but, as in common with all the Habsburgs he had been taught a handicraft, his especial choice of a trade had been that of master-printer. In all journalistic matters he was a genuine expert.

CHAPTER V

An Old Acquaintance in Berlin—I meet Prince Bismarck—His Friend Orloff—Bismarck's Secret Agents—Rudolph's Opinion of Bismarck—My Regard for the Chancellor

DURING our sojourn in Berlin, I renewed, very unexpectedly, acquaintance with an old schoolfellow who was my senior by a few years in the days which I spent at the well-known Jesuit establishment of Feldkirch, in Austria, one of the many great schools belonging to the Order, and whence I had passed to a branch school, Stonyhurst, in England. The man in question, Koinoff, a Pole, had never been one of my intimates, and had, indeed, entirely passed from my mind. It was at one of the Berlin Foreign Office receptions, just after my name had been announced, that he recalled himself to my recollection as having been a fellow-student at Feldkirch some twelve years previously. On exercising my memory, however, I was well able to place him as having been one of that well-known type of Catholic collegians whom their masters are wont to term "rebels." The Minimes of Brienne had, in his earlier days at that establishment, it may be remembered, so characterised the youthful Bonaparte. Koinoff had proved to the authorities at Feldkirch so intractable and so lacking in reverence for all the principles for which the Jesuit educational system

stood, that on more than one occasion, generally as a result of unusually outrageous conduct on his part, and after undergoing a sentence of castigation—popularly known in the school as "stiegerising"[1]—it was rumoured that he was about to be expelled. The influence of an uncle, a Canon of Budapest, secretary of the Cardinal-Archbishop, proved in all cases sufficiently strong to save him from the ignominy of expulsion, a far greater disgrace in Catholic Continental schools, I may say, than the English equivalent of being "removed" from a collegiate establishment.

Indeed, in my last year at Feldkirch, the reformed Koinoff had actually been received into the minor Scholasticate attached to the institution, a department in which those pupils who signified their predisposition to what was known as a "vocation" for the Jesuit Order went through a kind of preliminary training in Jesuitical discipline and methods. Some years afterwards, when at Stonyhurst, Stanislas Rokososki, a countryman of Koinoff, by the way, informed me in a letter that as a result of an act of peculiar villainy, on his part, the Feldkirch authorities had put the Scholastic and his trunk, early one morning, outside the big gates in the St Gall Road, prophesying all sorts of misfortune for his future career in life, and, as far as the Jesuit Order was concerned, at any rate, giving him a first-class anathema. You

[1] As in English schools boys speak of a flogging as being "horsed," so the pupils of Feldkirch called their punishment after Stieger, the servant who administered it.—DIARIST.

may imagine, therefore, that on meeting him in Berlin I was, at the very least, interested.

The fellow had, I must admit, an excellent appearance, and his manners were above reproach. He possessed, however, a combination of two features, which has never yet failed me in marking down what the English so expressively term "a sharp": his eyes had a distinctly wicked cast, and the fleshy part of his otherwise straight or Roman nose degenerated into an unexpected tilt upwards. Genius, the psychologists correctly inform us, is often enough marked by the trait known as eye-disparity; but the combination of strabismus with a nose such as I describe can only signify a genius for wrong-doing, baseness, treachery and, altogether, is eloquent of the presence of the entirely amoral—in my own experience. Koinoff, like many Austrian Poles known to me, was not so much cosmopolitan as non-national—meaning to say that his hypothesis of life was based mainly on the central idea of the Roman who tabloided the history of the Jewish race in the succinct phrase: "*Ubi aurum, ibi patria*"; and as my capacity for detecting the presence of a Jewish strain—aye, even to remote generations—is not less acute than was the ability of some of those old-fashioned abbés of the seventeenth century who possessed a magical gift for nosing out Jansenists, I was under illusion neither as to the ethnical nor the ethical quality of my Koinoff, and realised that in him lay every evidence of being what racing trainers term "a

fair throw-back" to Israel. I was, therefore, not surprised when he informed me that avuncular influence in Budapest had procured him a position as attaché in the personal service of the Prussian Chancellor.

To have been a personal agent of Bismarck, when that statesman flourished, amounted, as I well knew, to very much the same thing as to have been a member of the corps of *bravi* or *spadoni* during the hey-day of the Borgias—that is to say, the limit of possible performance might be required of the agent by his principal. The personal agents of Bismarck differed from the ordinary or extraordinary secret-service officials of the government, inasmuch as they drew their emoluments from the Chancellor's List, worked in his immediate department and were requisitioned mostly for work the nature of which was deemed to be of too profound and too delicate an importance for the detectives who acted on behalf of the secret police bureau which became so infamous under the notorious Stieber. Among the personnel were men of nearly all Western nationalities except British and American. Koinoff had been attached only some six or seven months previously, and not long enough, it was clear, to have as yet realised the demands which the position might make upon him. His work, he said, consisted mainly in précis and translation at the Chancellor's, and he admitted that as yet he had never made the personal acquaintance of his chief employer, but was serving under his code-

master, Petri. During my dispatch-carrying days I had learned enough of this functionary, Petri, to be aware that he acted in the service of his chief, Bismarck, as a kind of master of promising novices. Clearly, it seemed, Koinoff was destined for important things, provided he could weather the tests of the probationary period. I was not, however, particularly pleased with the effusiveness with which he sought to welcome me as an old fellow-student, and made some play with the object of cooling any further enthusiasm he should feel inclined to show *à mon égard.*

"Feldkirch," I remarked, "was, of course, the only available Jesuit school open to Germans after the expulsion of the Order from this country. I presume, therefore, you meet many of our old schoolfellows. They were numerous enough there, at any rate."

"All Germans look alike to me, to parody the vaudeville song," he answered vaguely; "and I have a bad memory for faces which do not attract me. The old names certainly force themselves on my recollection; but my position enables me to see but little of private society. Indeed, I cannot say my experience of official Berlin encourages me to remain here, and you may see me before very long in Vienna, perhaps."

"Vienna!" I exclaimed, with some surprise, reflecting how difficult the position of people of his irreligious antecedents must prove in our capital. "No question of returning to old loves

—the Scholasticate, for instance," I added, with a little malice.

"Don't be too hard on me," he returned; "the scholastic episode was a case of *force majeure* on the part of my people. You would be surprised to hear, however, that Berlin has become in these times a kind of promised land for the *abbé manqué*, and Bismarck's department is fairly beginning to *pulluler* with spoiled priests. Even my chief, Petri, started in life under a Cistercian cowl, and in Austria at that."

"There are no more Cistercians in Austria outside the capital, so it must have been some time ago," I objected. "Their last settlement was near Baden—yes, at Meyerling, I remember."

"Meyerling, Meyerling!" he repeated musingly. "Petri asked me a day or two ago if I had ever been at Meyerling. No; I do not know the place."

"It is quite a little hamlet in the hills," I explained; "the Archduke has a shooting-lodge there." And at that instant a movement in our immediate neighbourhood indicated the approach of a personage, and Prince Bismarck was announced.

Previously to my becoming attached to the service of the Archduke Rudolph, I had met Bismarck, to whom I had presented more than one dispatch in person. Whatever men may say against his name and character, he must always remain to my memory one of its most charming personal recollections, and to the end of my days

I shall continue to regard him as I regard a select number of those masters of school-years who taught my youthful and somewhat puzzled ideas how to shoot. Towards his own countrymen whom he employed there was much of the martinet in his attitude, and very few of the younger officials really regretted, I imagine, the debacle which took place in his momentous fortunes a few years later on his dismissal by the Kaiser Wilhelm. Towards foreigners, including my own countrymen, more especially Englishmen, or even men who like myself had lived in and knew England well, he always gave the best of that most charming personality which was ever at his disposal when he wished to please. On my previous official meetings with him he had accorded me, whenever it had been my duty to present dispatches, often an hour of his valuable time, discussing—and he always insisted on speaking English—all possible conditions of English life—horse-racing, fox-hunting, English public men, London newspapers, and the various representatives in the English capital of the *corps diplomatique*. It has often occurred to me since that these conversations were not entirely disinterested on his part, for on my once afterwards narrating to my master the nature of several such chats, the Archduke reflected musingly for a few moments, and then exclaimed: "The old fox! the old fox!" Pausing, he added, in his kindly way:

"But beware of that old man, and say as little as you need regarding myself or ourselves.

He is the most fascinating man in Europe when he wants to be, and I am not surprised that you are under his spell. I was myself till they cautioned me. In politics occasionally he is the best representative of the *homo homini lupus* that I know, or have read of; but he is always the vulpine—*vulpes vulpinissima*, if ever man was."

I had not seen the Prince since my arrival in Berlin, nor, indeed, since shortly before my transference to Karolyi's staff in London; but his memory was excellent, and after a few words with some of the permanent officials, a kindly glance from him motioned me to him, and I paid my respects, not altogether unconscious of a quick scrutiny which he directed at Koinoff, who transferred his attentions just then to another guest.

"Your Crown Prince has been in Berlin some days," the Prince began, "but I have not yet seen him. You leave shortly?"

"I am afraid I do not know what his Highness's intentions are, sir," I replied, "but I do not think our stay is to be a lengthy one."

"What a traveller the Archduke is," he returned, with a look of some penetration, adding quizzically: "Of course, the steeplechasing season has finished in England, I think?"

"Your Highness seems clearly entitled to know," I answered, with a smile of apprehension; "but I believe the steeplechasing season has just closed in England——"

"And so you will not return there just now," he interrupted, adding, with mock regret: "How

I wish I had the Archduke Rudolph's opportunities. He and the Prince of Wales go everywhere and do everything; they remind me of my lamented friend, Demetrius Orloff, whom I first met in Petersburg. Have you met him?"

I answered in the negative, adding that I had not been in Russia.

"It was not necessary to know Russia," the Chancellor explained, "to know Orloff. He had a house in every capital in Europe, and each house was at all times in readiness against his possible arrival. Sometimes it happened that he himself was not quite sure when he arrived in a city whether he owned a home there or not, and frequently, as he walked with his secretary along a well-known street, an intuition would come to him that he possessed a bit of property near by. Then the following dialogue would take place. Orloff, raising his melancholy Muscovite face, would point to a house on the opposite side of the street, and ask his secretary:

"'*A qui est cette maison là bas, mon ami?*'

"His secretary, a countryman of mine, with an atrociously bad French accent, would put up his pince-nez, examine the house closely, and reply:

"'*Mais, elle est à fous, monzeigneur.*'

"And the phlegmatic Orloff would say:

"'*Donc approchons; entr-rons; mangeons un morceau; buvons une bouteille; pr-renons une femme, et—partons en Russie.*'

"Your Archduke reminds me much of Demetrius, and has, indeed, the best time of all

the Crown Princes." And then he added quickly, with a mock solemn frown: "But, of course, I do not say he does not deserve it."

This was fairly typical of Bismarck's rather bourgeois badinage with younger men, and occasionally he used to carry it to extremes; as, for example, when he told Sigismund Rokososki, once bearing dispatches to him, that he regarded Austrians as the national hermaphrodites of Europe. Although a Pole, Rokososki had been brought up in Vienna, and resented the aspersion. He was a favourite with the Prince.

"My dear young friend," Bismarck replied simply, "I am only logical in what I say; I was the first man in the world to express the opinion that there are male nations and female nations. The pure-blooded Teuton races, like the Prussians, I take to be the male nations; France and the Latin races, as mainly representing the Celts, I take to be the females. Those Austrians are neither pure Teutons nor pure Celts. I therefore call them national hermaphrodites, like the good logician I am—*voilà tout*!"

I doubt if any minister ever lived who spoke fewer idle words than Prince Bismarck—that is to say, outside his very exiguous coterie of familiars, such as Bohlen, his cousin, generally known as "B. Bohlen," or his sons, Herbert and William—the former, by the way, a natural misanthrope and by no means the snob he was said to be—or his wife, the "sarcastic" Princess who counted for much more in Bismarck's career than is generally

known, for she directed the intrigues which, by practically depriving the Princess Royal of a personal clique in Prussia, enabled the Chancellor to defeat her policies, which were, it was said, mainly directed against himself and the elder son and their influence at the Castle. The journalistic *Hausfreund*,[1] named Moritz Busch, never to our knowledge in Vienna, played the very intimate rôle with Bismarck which he is said afterwards to have claimed in the voluminous Memoirs, a work that I have not, unfortunately, read. In the matter of sheer aggressive impertinence as regards quests for information, however, he was capable of travelling long distances, literally as well as figuratively, for I well remember his chartering a special train from Berlin to Vienna, in November of 1888, and waking us up at old Laxenburg in the early hours of the dawn with the object of inquiring if the rumour were true that Kaiser Franz contemplated abdicating in favour of the Archduke Rudolph. Weilen, my master's very intimate friend, and one of the most notable and well-informed journalists in Vienna in those days, dissuaded me, some years later, from reading the Memoirs, mainly on the ground of their unreliability and as representing what Bismarck would have liked his Boswell to write about him, rather than what Busch should have written in the interests of historical fact.

I repeat, however, particularly in the light of

[1] The Diarist does not translate this word, which means either a trencherman or a friend of the family.—EDITOR.

after-events, that even with more or less unimportant persons, like myself and Rokososki, Bismarck rarely spoke without intending that his words should "carry," if I may use such an expression; for he rarely wasted words with ordinary persons in private and unofficial life, unless, indeed, they were foreigners who were likely to give him information. Hoyos, who had served in Berlin and knew the Prince well, once explained this trait to the Archducal company by saying that Bismarck had only one love—Prussia—and that he was always scheming for her; consequently he saw farther than other men, owing to his singleness of purpose and aim. Once afterwards, in London, I heard the same remark made in almost the same words about an Englishman whom modern history has much honoured—namely, the late Mr Rhodes, and the man who made the remark was the explorer Stanley. The latter was explaining to a party of men how Rhodes had refused to take his advice and save vast sums of money in the construction of the Cape-to-Cairo railway. Stanley counselled running it by way of the Great Lakes, with the car-ferry system; Rhodes preferred the all-overland route, however, a policy which involved a much vaster expenditure. Someone ventured to ask an explanation for Rhodes's decision.

"Well," replied Stanley, "I suppose it was that Rhodes saw farther than other men."

And the words took me back to the days when Bismarck was the first man in Berlin—some said,

the only one. This, however, by the way; for I must recall what the Archduke had to say when Hoyos told us in Vienna that the Prussian Chancellor's prevision exceeded that of other men. I see my master again as if it were yesterday, his right arm thrown over his chair, the other resting on the table, and remember the characteristic look of calm reflection as he gazed at the heavy Habsburg opal ring on his white hand.

"Do you know, gentlemen," he said, after a pause, "I never look at Bismarck's face but I think of Aristotle's suggestion that it would not be impossible to categorise the human race according to the resemblance of men to the various species of animals and draw reliable deductions in that way as to their salient characteristics. Thus, I never see a bloodhound but I think of Bismarck —the deep-set eyes with the reddish tinge, the heavily arched eyebrows with their suggestion of weeping, the nostrils drawn taut towards the inexorable mouth and the pendulous jowl. Old Prince Charles[1] once told me that on the night of Sedan the Chancellor expressed to his table company the philosophy he held in regard to war when he declared that the vanquished should be left only eyes to weep with. Bismarck is a quick drinker, and no doubt he had drunk liberally when he uttered the phrase. Like most of the chiefs of the Long Lip,[2] I have myself not been

[1] A brother of the old Emperor William, presumably.—EDITOR.

[2] Though it was before my association with the Archduke, and I did not hear it said, he once, it was related, in very congenial company, with excellent humour, explained the origin of the

blameless in this respect, and know what men will do and say under the persuasion of Bacchus; but Bismarck never recanted—never denied having used the phrase, which has passed into current story and may be taken to represent his philosophy in the matter. Such a man is to me no longer human, but animal—a bloodhound in human shape, and, indeed, all his conquistadorial successes have been due to the fact that, as the French say: '*Il a chassé de race.*' "

Jokai, who was present, as he often was at the Prince's table, quietly interjected the word "Stieber!" which in reality means bloodhound, and the company very deservedly approved the Archduke's *bon mot*, for all were well aware that the Chancellor's chief spy, Stieber, and his organised espionage had, far more than Prussian military genius, beaten us, in Bohemia, in 1866, and the French in 1870.

All this recurred to my memory at the Berlin Foreign Office reception on the night on which Koinoff renewed his acquaintance with me, and as I looked across at the giant Chancellor, voluble and gesticulative, surrounded by a dozen obsequious officials, I could not help reflecting that there was much in the Stagirite's ideas of physiognomy, and that though Bismarck's admirers spoke of him as a God-fearing man, there was that in his face

so-called Austrian Lip on the ground of the Habsburg capacity for deep-drinking. The *bon mot* immediately passed into common currency, and to be a "Knight of the Long Lip" was for long a well-known phrase in gay Viennese society.—DIARIST.

which betokened rather a fear of man and gave one the key to his policy of Blood and Iron. Nevertheless, I found it hard to divest myself of the early regard he had won from me by his very charming and unaffected condescension to one of minor importance.

CHAPTER VI

The *Kulturkampf* in Germany—Position of the Catholic Body—Prussian Official *Salons*—Austria's National Party and the Vatican—Kaiser Franz Josef's Life Story—Rudolph's Rationalism—His Ideas about Religion

By the year 1887, I may say, the aggressive phase of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*, directed against the Roman Church, had given way to a compromise throughout Confederated Germany, based principally on the co-operation which the Catholic party was willing to afford the Chancellor in his fight against those growing radical and really anti-monarchical forces which have become known in history as the Social Democratic movement. To use his own phrase, Bismarck, in imitation of the Emperor Henry IV., had "gone to Canossa" and called a truce with those spiritual forces which he had been unable to overcome or turn to his own political ends. His conceptions had been the same old conceptions which, in turn, had moved Henry VIII. and the Byzantine Patriarchs in the sixteenth century, and later Louis XIV. and Bonaparte—that is to say, he aspired to create within the new Confederation a Catholicism akin to the Gallicanism which Louis, secretly, and Napoleon, openly, desired for France; briefly a so-called Erastian condition of affairs, pure and simple, in which the

Catholic hierarchy should become the agents of the State, and the Pope little better than a memory.

Like most Lutherans, including the chiefs of Hohenzollern, Bismarck was bitterly anti-Catholic, and made no secret of his hatred of the Vatican and all it stood for. On the triumphant conclusion of the war against France, in 1870, he is recorded to have said that he would not rest till, as far as Germany was concerned at least, he had shut up Roman Catholicism within the walls of the Vatican, and during the struggles, or rather the persecutions, attending on the *Kulturkampf*, the phrase held a wide currency in Catholic countries. In every phase of his fight against his countrymen of this religion he had, it is very certain, the whole-hearted support of the old Emperor William, and Crown Prince Frederick; but, above all, the encouragement of Prince William of Prussia, who, as early as his twenty-first year, had among his intimates (my master often assured me) begun that pose of an *esprit fort* which always finds an opportune platform in anti-religious or atheistic movements. Some years before the time of which I write the astuter Chancellor had, however, realised that those methods which he had perfected for the overthrow of material forces were far from sufficing when it became a question of fighting purely spiritual forces, and like the great statesman he was, the Chancellor knew how to bow before conditions against which monarchs and armies had

thrown their might unavailingly for two thousand years—namely, the forces of Christianity.

The result of the compromise was that Berlin, which, during the acute phases of the *Kulturkampf*, had adopted an attitude towards Catholic clerics far more emphatically hostile than that which marked Paris during the reign of anti-clericalism immediately preceding the final disestablishment of the Church and the rupture of the Concordat by the so-called Associations Act of 1906—Berlin, I repeat, social as well as political, acting under orders expressed through an extraordinarily well-organised and servile Press, made a complete *volte-face* in respect of its attitude towards the Catholic hierarchs and the representatives of the Vatican throughout the Confederation; a change of demeanour, not only welcome to the astute Pontiff Leo XIII., but one which he was quick to turn to the advantage of his centred and ambitious self and the Church.

Naturally, I saw but little of Berlin official functions, but the few to which I received invitations, during the several short sojourns which I made by the Spree, when carrying dispatches or accompanying the Archduke, reminded me almost of some of the great cardinalitial *salons* by the Tiber, thronging with the flower of the Curia's courtiers in multi-coloured cassocks, as well as the fairest women of the Papal nobility, and at which receptions I used often to pass the time counting the personages that were not draped in frockery. Cardinal-princes, bishops, monsignori

and nuncios were, at some of the official gatherings in Berlin of the post-Canossa period, almost as numerous as the glowering heroes of the *corps de garde*, and, indeed, often struck me as the only human-faced actors in these somewhat stiltêd scenes of wooden-visaged Prussian officialdom. At the same time the Vatican was assuring its political footing in the Prussian capital by the establishment of a nunciature, the directing spirits of which were among the ablest representatives whom the Curia could find; so that, much to the disgust of their "predikatorial" brethren of the cloth, as well as the Lutheran bureaucracy, Roman influences began to play a busy rôle in the social and political affairs of official Berlin.

Now, such a condition of affairs was by no means looked upon with pleasure by the growing national party in Austria, the unofficial leader of which was the Archduke Rudolph, and I will state the reasons for this. The Vatican, however much it may lay claim to be on the side of the angels, has invariably in its history made it a sound policy, where possible, to be also on the side of the big battalions. In the eyes of Rome, Austria was a decadent power, and in the opinion of men like Leo and Rampolla that verdict had been long since confirmed, not only by the battle of Sadowa, but also by the negative rôle which, from 1870 onwards, and the rise of Prussia to the headship of the Central Powers of Europe, the Dual Monarchy played in active Germanic

politics. The Catholicism of the peoples of Austria, moreover, is not of that blindly fervent type which marks that of the purely Latin or Celtic races. It is, to use a phrase coined by a part-countryman of mine, who has written much on historical matters, "geo-political"—that is to say, Austrians, and I include all the peoples under Kaiser Franz, will accept so much of Catholicity as adapts itself to the varying conditions of its various nations. In other words, there runs throughout the Austrian Empire, in respect of its attachment to Catholic principles, a strong tendency towards a type of Russian Orthodoxy, which, of course, acknowledges no Papal authority.

I think the exercise of the Veto against Rampolla's election to the Papal Chair, in 1903, was a very clear indication of the sentiment I mean, for if that Veto meant anything, it meant that Austria would not recognise a Pope whose avowed policy towards the Dual Monarchy was one of denationalising (or, if you will, de-Gallicanising, for this is what it amounted to) the Church in each separate state, and in accordance with the traditional spirit of Rome, of "universalising" it. The result of this would have been to break the influence of the reigning, or any Austrian Emperor, whose power in the Empire was bounden up with each separate nation's attachment to the House of Habsburg. The creation of politico-religious factions in the different states of Austria-Hungary would have been a short cut to disrupting the Empire; and

this was the dream of the Sicilian Pope-Elect, Rampolla. It is now no secret that Rome obeyed the Veto of Kaiser Franz in 1903, for the simple reason that she was presented with the momentous alternative that if Rampolla were installed in the Papal Chair, Austria would have, as the saying went, " gone into Orthodoxy "—in other words, refused any longer to acknowledge the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, and I am convinced that only small minorities, in the " geo-political " system mentioned, would have refused to acknowledge Kaiser Franz as head of an Austro-Hungarian Catholic Church.

Apart from the anti-Austrian bias of the Curia, mainly composed of native Italian ecclesiastics, Rome had seen with a friendly eye the rise to power of an overmastering Prussia, which, by federating the States of Austria-Hungary under its ægis, should bring about the disruption of the Habsburg Empire and so assure her ecclesiastical aims throughout what are now the dominions of Kaiser Francis Joseph. Moreover, Bismarck had much to offer the Vatican in return for a pro-Berlin as against a pro-Vienna policy. By putting a term to the penalism of the *Kulturkampf*, the Chancellor assured the new German Empire all the national benefits arising out of the social, commercial and political prosperity of a strongly domesticated population; above all, a certain annual accretion in numbers from a great body which abhorred the doctrines of Malthus in proportion to their material well-

being. Further, the Westphalian and Rhineland countries of Germany are, in the majority, Catholic; their nearest neighbour is Catholic Belgium. Roman gold had long been subsidising a strong Catholic party in Holland, and, to cut the story short, the Vatican has been under no illusions that Prussia, as the directing State of Germany, had long since intended to lay *main forte* on the Netherland twins. In fine, Prussia was doing for the spiritual power what the spiritual power could not, naturally enough, do for herself. This, then, was the logic of the Vatican outlook.

I do not imagine that anyone who is acquainted with history will deny the evidence of consummate statesmanship given by the Archduke Rudolph in his policy of counteracting the combination of Prussia and Rome against the Austrian Empire, by the formation of a strong national party, conceived on democratic lines, throughout the Habsburg dominions. The origin of this movement was due wholly to his own initiative, as well as to his realisation of the fact that only a Habsburger could have, with any hope of ultimate success, welded from so many various nationalities, mostly unsympathetic if not antagonistic, into anything like cohesive unity, a movement which, in my opinion, held within it all the potentialities of the *Tugendbund* of 1813 that liberated Germany from the yoke of Napoleon. The creation of a strong imperial nationalist body within a multi-nationed empire like the Dual

Monarchy was the surest move against the machinations, spiritual as well as political, which, Roman-wise, were seeking to retain and extend the racial divisions in order that Berlin might govern. Bismarck himself, for all the splendid political genius which was his, could never have federated the Austro-Hungarian dominions as we know them to-day. Only a Habsburger could have held them as they are, and proof thereof is shown, even to our time, by the fact that it is solely the personal prestige, as a Habsburger, of old Kaiser Franz which has enabled the Empire to withstand the successive assaults of Pan-Germanism and predatory Jewish influences, both of which—more particularly the last-named—were based mainly on a calculation of the spoils which must fall to the agents of disruption.

Yet even with Kaiser Franz it is true that his ability as a monarch has counted for far less in the stability of the Empire than a certain enduring pathos which has invested his reign from the very first—the pathos of an untried and inexperienced boy succeeding to vast dominions at the age of eighteen, and in times of political turbulency and stress; the pathos of sinister affliction which has hovered over his throne since early days; the pathos of martial catastrophe and its humiliations; the pathos of swift bereavement and the final pathos of old age. Personal suffering has done for the Emperor Francis Joseph what glory in his lifetime could not effect for the most martial of his ancestors, and without the black

shadows of misfortune which called forth their sympathies, his statesmanship would have availed him but poorly against the soul-awakening of his many peoples. To have conceived the nationalisation of his States as a democratic federation would have been an impossible feat for his imagination; to have understood its import, entirely beyond his sense of the actualities of the age.

At this juncture in the history of my country, therefore, the most portentous figure in its life was the Crown Prince Rudolph, superb in health and with every promise of a lengthy life; intellectually admitted to be one of the most able princes of his time, and certainly the most brilliant of his years. Like the majority of men of those days, the colour of his mind had been strongly tinged with the darker philosophies which sprang from the Materialist schools, and inclined towards the verdicts of Rationalism. Naturally, this fact was not allowed to pass unmarked among the conservative and non-political portion of our ecclesiastics, who stood towards their more liberal-minded Catholic brethren in very much the same attitude as the Russian Raskolnik, or conservative Orthodox churchmen stand towards the Stundists or liberals in religion. These non-political conservatives were in a minority throughout Austria, but, as often happens in affairs in which the Vatican plays a part, it was a minority wielding tremendous power and exercising wide influence outside its own immediate

circle. Above all, it was the wealthiest section of our Catholic body in Austria-Hungary and possessed a strong hold on the devout populations of the agricultural regions. Towards that growing movement, of which the Archduke Rudolph was the guiding spirit, the conservative Catholics, in respect of the hierarchy and clergy, at any rate, by no means disguised their sentiments, these being very much the same as those which the Church entertained during the latter part of his life towards my old friend and neighbour (in Italy), Senator Fogazzaro, one of the leading spirits of that peculiar *cultus* which goes by the name of Modernism, but which, in reality, is only a kind of Pantheism, with a thinking God thrown in.

To my master the Archduke, the attitude of the hierarchs in Vienna was not unamusing, yet I am fairly at a loss to describe it. Princes and great nobles meet with extravagant indulgence, in my opinion, from ecclesiastics of all denominations; more particularly so, however, from the ecclesiastics of the Catholic Church, who are always at elaborate pains to make themselves "solid" with people of rank and wealth, and I have found, in every country in which I have resided long enough to use my observation, that the lower the origin of such ecclesiastics, the sharper their genius for truckling before men and women of the great world. In so-called missionary countries, where the agents of Catholicity are fighting for a footing, this is — perhaps —

excusable enough, but it is precisely in Catholic countries, *par excellence*, such as France, Belgium, Italy and my own country, that I have found this particular trait of the Roman cleric reach its most insufferable proportions. Even when a student at the academy of Feldkirch, this attitude of our reverend masters forced itself upon my boyish observation, and I realised that sterling merit among pupils of middle-class birth never met with anything like the approbation which was given to half as much ability and effort when displayed among the noble classes.

In justice to the fellow, I must say that it was a sense of this inequality which turned the above-mentioned Koinoff into the "rebel" he became; for, intellectually considered, he was at least the equal of the best of the *Adler*, and socially immeasurably the superior of many of the ecclesiastical gentlemen who did him the honour of giving him the benefit of their half-baked instruction. I fear, indeed, that many of the large armies of "rebels" annually turned out by clerical colleges may justly ascribe their intellectual attitude in after life towards the Church to this sense of having in earlier days been discriminated against by men who take on "gentility" with the cassock, or who want to be gentlemen first and priests afterwards—a failing in most religions.

The Archduke Rudolph, as most people in his day well knew, and himself made no attempt to deny, was a first-class sinner. He was especially

strong on what Arthur Potocki used to call the "middle" sins, meaning—I always presumed—offences against those Commandments which are invoiced half-way down the Decalogue, and which deal with man's relations towards woman—"coverte" and otherwise. He was essentially what Carlyle would have termed a "strong" man, in the sense in which the so-called Sage applied the phrase to Augustus, the Elector of Saxony, who had three hundred and sixty-five illegitimate children, it will be remembered. Like most men of happy fortunes of the boudoir kind, however, Rudolph rarely expatiated on such matters; and, indeed, his conversations, even among his closest intimates, were always models of decency. The only remark I ever heard from him which bore upon subjects which are often a favourite topic in gay circles arose one evening during a discussion on the then budding science of Eugenics, when he observed that the father of that system was, without question, the enthusiastic Senator who rose up in the Forum and moved that an enactment should be added to the Statute-Book giving the triumphant Julius Cæsar access to any woman in Rome, and he quoted the passage in point—from Suetonius, I think.[1]

When official ceremonies at Schœnbrunn and elsewhere brought the Archduke into contact with high-placed prelates, the demeanour of

[1] The statement is certainly to be found in *The Twelve Cæsars* of Suetonius. The fact is recorded, however, by more respectable Roman historians, and is, in any case, authentic.—EDITOR.

these last was always of a perfectly correct kind. With ecclesiastics of less powerful position, however, their attitudes were of the most ridiculous mixture of courtly reverence and ecclesiastical deprecation; and, indeed, as words fail me badly, I can only recall one historic episode which fits the case. Do you remember when another first-class sinner, also born in the purple, Louis XV. by name, once held his first Drawing Room at Versailles after an illness which his Court had fondly hoped would carry him off; and how the courtiers almost tumbled over themselves in their anxiety to pay their devoirs and congratulate the monarch on his recovery? Among them was one very fat bishop, whose mind was severely exercised as to what his precise demeanour should be. He wished to give expression to his grief that the King should have been ill, and yet he wanted to show joy at his sovereign's recovery. The very reverend courtier therefore compounded by presenting himself effusively at the throne, his rubicund face suffused with a broad and jubilant smile, while his eyes bubbled over with hot, beady tears—a picture which proved too much for the King and his courtiers, who all broke into giddy laughter. Any encounter between my master and the minor monsignori of Vienna always reminded me of that picture of Versailles, from some eighteenth-century French chronicler.

I once ventured to ask the Archduke his opinion of religion in general, and he answered me somewhat in the following way :—

"I believe, firmly and sincerely, that the case for Religion is eternally proved, and that no secular movement, as long as the world of men like ourselves continues to endure, can successfully assail either its existence or its claim to exist. It is a social necessity. At present that Religion is, as far as the Caucasian race is concerned, the Christian Religion, but I am far from prepared to say that it will always be Christianity in its existing form. Yet Religion I hold to be an essential, both for the governors and the governed, and a Religion, too, which postulates a God such as we are now asked to believe in; and that for the reason that the long history of lay moralities has shown beyond any possibility of doubt that it is futile to attempt to teach men to be just or virtuous unless you suggest to them a supernatural Being who, possessing all such attributes, is entitled to hold the balance—to judge, to reward and to condemn. The ethics of Rome and Greece, what did they do towards humanising either Rome or Greece? Strip the Roman of his law-sense, in which he excelled, or the Greek of his speculative and artistic notions, and you had a pair of beings who, in many respects, were not so highly civilised as the earliest races that inhabited Canton and Lahore, when the line of civilisation first began to travel westward, as they teach us nowadays. It took the one-God philosophy to make the infra-man into a human being, and it required Christ to make him a humane man in its ideal sense. In other words, it required a belief

in one God to humanise man and the lesson of Christianity to civilise him.

"For all that I am convinced that there are few real believers in the world, and that the great teachers of religion, from Paul to Aquinas, and down to our own day, have had little or no belief beyond the conviction that what they preached had the effect of refining the intelligence or the soul of man—in other words, made him respectable and self-respecting; which conviction indicates, to my mind, that the Psyche of the Ancients and the *Soul* of the Christian preacher of the present, or the past, are practically convertible terms—that is to say, mind is soul and soul is mind, as the Greek held. The most we may say even of the greatest of those who have preached the monotheistic faith—for all others are negligible—is, that they possess hope, simply, and that in their excess of hopefulness they confound the sentiment with belief. That any thoughtful man really and sincerely believes in his heart that there exists a God who is personally interested in him, I refuse even to think, though I will freely admit that I envy the state of mind of any man who can truthfully declare that his convictions carry him to that length. Given, however, the fundamental teachings of Christianity, which are educative, humanising and civilising, it must be allowed that for the sincere teachers of Religion even to hope there is a God—for the majority of them neither hope nor believe—is sufficiently good grounds for them to urge the objects of their

pious solicitude to believe in one. To that extent am I a believer in Religion, and my conviction remains that it is only to this extent its most intellectual teachers advocate, or have ever advocated, religious principles."

CHAPTER VII

The Vetsera Family in Vienna—Their Levantine Origin—The Empress Elizabeth and Marie Vetsera—"Home-Day" at the Hofburg—Love, Immortality and a Cross-Examination—I discourse to my Master of Love and "Residual Forces"—The Archduke and Women—Confessional—Madame de Staël and Napoleon

THE Vetsera family had a peculiar enough standing in Vienna, and may be said, by the social position which they took up on their arrival there in the eighties, to have been the forerunners of the cosmopolitanisation of Viennese society, which, for the past generation, has wrought almost as much havoc with the *grand monde* of the Austrian capital as the introduction of financial adventurers and plutocratic *parvenus* has played in the destruction of London society, and, perhaps even more so, that of Berlin. As far as I could gather, the Vetsera tribe was by way of being one of *boyar*, or squirearchic, origin, which had first made its social appearance in either Bucharest or Belgrade, I forget which. There was a strong Near-Eastern cast in the countenances of its various members, and the Baroness Helen Vetsera, the mother of Marie Vetsera, was in every respect a typical Levantine woman. She belonged to a more or less celebrated family of wealth, known by the name of Baltazzi, and it was one of her

two brothers, Aristides Baltazzi, I think, who first came into note as an international sportsman by winning the English Derby of 1876 with a horse called Kisber, an animal which receives due mention by writers of note who witnessed its performances—Sir George Chetwynd, for instance, and the well-known trainer, Porter of Kingsclere. It was currently stated in Vienna that the earliest origin of the fortunes of the family was due to the good fortunes of an officer in the palace of one of the Sultans of a previous age, and in view of the subsequent fate of a daughter of this house, the suggestive coincidence has been of more than superficial interest to me. The name Baltazzi has obviously a Græco-Jewish smack.

As most people are well aware, the Empress Elizabeth was passionately devoted to all matters associated with Greece, and the men and women of that sediment of a nation always made a peculiar appeal to the hyper-emotional mother of the Archduke Rudolph. Many of those who were prominent in her personal entourage were Greek men and women; some of her ladies of honour, one of her private secretaries, her favourite reader, were all Levantine Greeks whose presence as a subfusc breed much antagonised members of the pure white Viennese aristocracy. At some Drawing Room or other, held in Vienna, at which the Empress was present, Madame Vetsera attended, with her daughter, then just out, whose appearance at once caught the notice of the consort of Kaiser Franz, and, as was usually the

case when her sentiments became engaged, the august lady invited the young debutante to join her personal circle. In Vienna in those days Monday was always known among the Imperial family as "Home-Day"—that is to say, it was the weekly occasion set aside for a reunion of all those members of the Habsburg tribe who should then be in Vienna, and so great was the sense of family and alliance running through this practical clan that Kaiser Franz rarely presided at anything less than a full table. Incidentally, I may say, in order to indicate how little difference there is between one class of servant and another, Monday was always my own "day off." Then, unless we happened to be travelling, I rarely saw my master after first-breakfast, for he too had the family spirit to the full, and gave up Mondays to his Imperial parents. It was on the occasion of one of these gatherings that he met the youthful Marie Vetsera, the last days of whom were to be so fatefully linked with his own.

Now my own ideas about Love and Life are, perhaps, somewhat bizarre or fantastic, and I do not suppose for a moment that many people will agree with them. I state them here, not, of course, because they are mine, but simply because my master and myself once discovered that our views coincided on the same subject. To myself, the principle involved in the idea of Immortality is far more clearly—I had better say plausibly—pointed by the forces which operate in what we call Love than by any other condition of the soul

or mind that I am aware of. Most men in their time, and most women, for that matter, undergo the experience of meeting members of the opposite sex in whom they recognise at least a potential affinity, or, if you prefer it, towards whom they are at once attracted, the process not being, of course, confined to opposite sexes, for men feel attracted towards men, just as women are occasionally attracted towards members of their own sex, with feelings of real friendship and camaraderie. I am not a very firm believer in what is called the Soul as apart from the Mind—that is to say, in that matter I am rather a Greek, and do not attempt to differentiate—beyond this important reservation, however, that, for me, the Mind is the conscious and the Soul the sub-conscious.

The sub-conscious,[1] as all men of experience will attest, though apparently the sleeping partner in the combination, is by far the more effective force, whether in its active operations or in its passive condition, and in some proof of this I may say that poets and literary men of the higher order have admitted to me that they work by virtue of what the Greek called the inner spirit or *daimōn* within them, a force of which they are only conscious in the fullest sense at the time. In no other condition of life of

[1] The Archduke used to say that he could best describe the working of the sub-conscious by the common enough act of unconsciously counting the hour-strokes of a clock, although the mind is engaged on some other business.—DIARIST.

which I know does there exist this dual energy, one component of which has the faculty of criticising and checking the operations of the other. It was at this point in my explanation that the Archduke, when we discussed the matter, interrupted me.

"Well, where is your relationship between love and immortality?" he inquired, with a *narquois* smile which was his own.

"In my view," I replied, "the sub-conscious corresponds to what is called conservation of energy in the material domain—in other words, it is the residual spiritual force which does not die and which carries with it through all time the memory of previous conditions, personal, local *und so weiter*. Accordingly, then, when two persons, male or female, meet in such a way that their psychical elements come into play, and each reveals to the other a liking, an attraction, a desire for mutual association, then I maintain that the Soul (or the sub-conscious) is simply picking up the threads of an ancient fellowship, or, I might say, has found its affinity." [1]

"How, then, do you account for the fact that men and women who have for a period found themselves reciprocally very attractive cease very suddenly to regard each other with love, or even liking?" my master asked.

"That, I should say," was my answer, "is

[1] The Diarist has not hit upon anything very novel in this theory, which was taught by Plato, and was known as the principle of anamnēsis, or previous recollection.—EDITOR.

not difficult to explain. Indeed, it proves my theory, at least to my own satisfaction. It is just the love of a La Vallière against the passion of a Montespan, or a Maintenon for Louis XIV. In love the mental attitude is everything, consequently it endures; in passion it is a matter of physical attraction, and if your Highness will permit the expression, passion soon becomes depolarised—the circuit soon ceases to conduct. So that even our passion must be *menagé* or economised."

"Profound, very profound indeed!" observed the Archduke, with friendly sarcasm. "How old are you?"

"Twenty-five," I replied.

"As you have reached that mature age," he continued, with affected loftiness, "then, of course, you will be able to tell me what happens to your 'residual force' when life leaves the body. *Expliquez, morbleu*"—a common phrase of his.

"*J'y ai pensé, Altesse,*" I rejoined somewhat sententiously, recollecting Talleyrand on a less pleasant occasion. "I have thought of that, too, and confess myself in some difficulty. Your Highness knows, however, the old Keltic philosophy which was taught in pre-Roman Scotland and Ireland, and which held that man's thought was identical with what they called 'world-light.' The central idea was that light and thought-force were identical, a perfectly plausible and workable hypothesis which your Highness may allow me to expound one of these days. I often think that

primitive thinkers, being nearer real Nature than ourselves, were more likely to reach unprejudiced and, therefore, truer conclusions as to things as they essentially are. Indeed, I see ample proof of this contention in the fact that Thales and his brother Physicists, who based all their hypotheses of life on the elements, air, earth, fire, water—the old Keltic idea—really taught all the essential philosophies by which we lay such store to-day, simply because their setting is more amplified, more recondite—I really cannot find the right expression."

"More complicated, perhaps," the Archduke conceded. "Yes, the human mind, which hardly understands the obvious, dearly loves a puzzle. I agree with you, however, and I think, also, that metaphysical philosophy is a fool's science, a long process of travelling in circles, which leads to nowhere. But you keep our 'residual forces' waiting. What of their fate?"

"Well, your Highness," I explained, "I pin my faith to the 'world-light' theory, and this being so I am forced to conclude that such forces as I speak of have a real locus in the mind, and in the work of its cerebral functions. An idea is not, of course, stored in the brain, but by what a Greek would have termed a photismic or light-process, it is always available for reproduction when the memory calls for it. On this principle, I can properly and fully explain to myself the nature of dreams, which, I may say, are far more varied and vivid in men and women of historic

lineage than they are in those of unancestral stock, whose lives have been dull and uneventful, and without episode sufficiently arresting to photograph itself on the brain-cells. Accordingly, then, I maintain that my residual forces return to the ether."

"To be logical, therefore," replied the Prince, "and to allow your affinities to meet again, you must assume that all beings that existed in any given age would all live their lives over again in some subsequent age and at the same time. That is the philosophy of Tibet, I think?"

"I will not subscribe to anything in the shape of Mahatmaism or so-called astral influences, your Highness. I think, however, that the rarity of true loves and true friendships in the world points to the conclusion that psychic affinities are proportionately rare in their recurrence in the process of the suns—in other words, that only the lucky ones find their affinities. Ordinary cases of love or friendship are cases of convenience or social expediency, and both physically and psychically they indicate, in the majority of instances, that they belong to overlapping series, the result being that it is only one couple in many hundreds of thousands which ever meets its fellow-soul and is happy in the mental and psychical sense to which I allude."

"All of which is, of course, highly empiricist, as the scholars term it, and can be argued neither to an end nor to a purpose. I agree with your ideas, however, as to the mind and the sub-

conscious and the deductions as to love and friendship which you draw from them. I disagree heartily, however, with your idea—interestingly stated, I admit—that women love longer than men. That is certainly not the case in any grade of life, and least of all in my own. I doubt if princes are ever loved for themselves, and even if they are they never have the satisfaction of realising it by any possible test. You mention La Vallière. I do not think she had any positive love for Louis, which was not primarily based on the hope that she would one day share his throne—a venal love, which is no love at all in your sense, but rather, as you say, one of social convenience or expediency: ambition, in fine, which placed herself first, in reality, and the King in the second place. This she would not, of course, admit to herself.

"Women are the eternal victims of self-delusion; they have no religious sense as men have a religious sense—that is to say, a man who really possesses and professes a religion feels himself bound by the ordinances of that religion; but by what ordinances will a woman consider herself bound when she is given, say, religion on the one hand, and on the other, not the man *she* loves, but the man who loves *her*? In my experience, none; and before her desire to be loved, honour, family, God, conscience—all may go to the winds of the wide world. The Catholic Church has certainly taken the proper measure of woman, and I am not surprised at all that

certain learned doctors of the Middle Ages should have discussed seriously the question whether woman really had or had not a soul. Consider the Confessional, however; what an irresistible appeal to the only positive quality a woman can be said to possess—vanity! See how beautifully it works—both ways; for its appeal is made equally to good characters and to bad, and the woman who leads the blameless life is not less anxious to advertise her *âme blanche* to her confessor, than her sinful sister is to show him what an object of interest and unrest she proves to the sons of Belial. I am far from declaring, however, that some sort of spiritual or mental relief is not derived from the act of unloading one's mind or conscience of perilous personal secrets that weigh one down. You do not, of course, to account for this, require to be told the nature of the psychological process which is here involved."

"Auto-suggestion, I presume?"

"Auto-suggestion, of course," replied the Archduke, with friendly vehemence; "and it is certain that the inventors of this particular form of sacrament were excellent psychologists. The principle was known, you may remember, to Eastern nations, and, of course, you recollect, from your nursery days, the eminent Oriental statesman of the Fable who, finding himself unable to keep State secrets, was wont to whisper them at nightfall to the cabbages and cauliflowers, and so relieve his surcharged soul. But his political enemies eventually got on his track, and,"

he added with a laugh, "the poor man lost his head in the end, I think."

I ventured to ask His Highness if he truly believed that the principle underlying the Confessional was a political one, and that, as he had said, psychological ideas entered into the original conceptions of its value as a political instrument. His answer was to the effect that it was only when the Roman hierarchy was beginning to gather political momentum at Rome, in the third century, the need of an organised system of espionage upon the community was found necessary in order to assure the foundations of the temporal and political fabric of the Church, and the Confessional was chosen as the means most suited to the end in view,[1] since hostile intrigue, which could not be discovered through the men, was fairly certain to be found out through the women and children, under Socratic cross-examination by astute confessors.

"But," objected the Crown Prince, "we are wandering far away from our subject—woman. The attitude of all men of action, more particularly princes, towards political women should be that of Napoleon towards Madame de Staël, who, there can be no question, remains the greatest woman that history has yet revealed. To have worked, and with success, for the destruction of

[1] In his *History of the Christian Church* the Roman Catholic Bishop of Tarbes, Dr Duchesne, declares that in A.D. 150 Hermas made no mention of penance, confession or absolution as part of Church teaching.—DIARIST. [This work was placed on the *Index* in 1912.—EDITOR.]

Napoleon and his system in Petersburg, in Berlin, in Vienna and in London, with voice and pen, is an achievement beside which the work of all save half-a-score of *men* in the world's history approaches the proportions of distinctly minus quantities, while the work of the great female sovereigns of the world remains local and provincial beside what the daughter of Necker accomplished single-handed. And though he was the natural enemy of my House, I admit that Napoleon was the greatest of all men since antiquity. Yet he admitted that had he dealt less harshly with Madame de Staël her influence as an educative force must have contributed to the stability of his throne. At all events his treatment of de Staël forced her to prove herself not less the greatest woman of the modern world than he had shown himself its greatest man. Room in the same world for such a couple, and in the same age, there could certainly not have been.

"Nevertheless, my mind has exercised itself at different periods over a highly interesting question which the psychologists of history—to give them their new name—have entirely overlooked. I present it to them—here it is: Did Madame de Staël love Napoleon? Was her political pilgrimage to the capitals of reactionary Europe dictated by her desire to restore the Bourbons, or to bring back the days of Consular Republicanism, which was monarchical in all but name; or was not a disappointed heart at the

root of the enmity she discovered as soon as she realised that her exile was irrevocable? I can see and will admit many points against my hypothesis—one in particular being her perennial polyandrousness, as Potocki calls it. Admitted; but I could argue, to my own satisfaction at least, that her really *belle passion* in life was Napoleon."

which I could not have put to my master even in his most intimate of moods, and I never had the hardihood to ask if his fair lady was possessed of intellectual gifts. On my own casual judgment of character, however, for I met her, very formally, but on two occasions, I should have said that Mademoiselle was altogether a woman without serious thought, and the Archduke's most intellectual friend, Professor Udel, with whom I was on very cordial terms indeed, agreed with my verdict in this respect. Of all the men in my master's coterie, only Potocki and Bombelles had had the advantage of meeting her at close range, and as neither said anything in disparagement of her personality, I concluded that they had little to say in glorification thereof, since they said nothing at all.

Strange, too, though it may seem, I was not a little irritated by the Archduke's sudden fancy for this, to me, somewhat superficial and emotional maid, who certainly could not be said to have possessed overwhelming contributory gifts in great beauty or irresistible fascination to explain the influence which she certainly exercised over Rudolph. In regard to favourite women, the Archduke was an unusually silent man, and at no time would he permit his familiars to touch upon the subject of his relations with them. All we understood regarding Mademoiselle was that she became, in his company, the reverse of what she appeared to be in the general society of her class; this was perfectly comprehensible to us, for there was none who knew

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Photograph : Stanley's Press Agency.

MADEMOISELLE MARIE VETSERA, JANUARY, 1888.

better than the Archduke how to draw forth from favoured men and women their most deeply hidden characteristics.

Hoyos had seen her display, in the company of my master and himself, a vivacity and sparkle which (Hoyos declared) would have done justice to a very bright Frenchwoman; on the other hand, Udel, who had been more favoured than myself in meeting her, declared that the bond which united the lady with Rudolph was a certain mystical temperament which, if this were the case, was a trait common to the two lovers, for under certain conditions the Archduke was the most mystical of men, a strong vein of superstition being the form in which his mysticism generally declared itself. In my recollection of Marie Vetsera, I must not omit to say that she was famed throughout Vienna, as, indeed, were all the ladies of her family, for their extreme elegance and taste in dress—a trait not too common among my countrywomen, I am bound to admit.

I am convinced from what I myself learned of the Archduke Rudolph's character, and apart from what he told me, that, like all men of intellectual worth, he had very little regard for women outside their appointed rôle in the order of things, although he once admitted that he never neglected an opportunity of listening to what his favourites had to say concerning current events; not so much, he was careful to explain, because such opinions represented the views of the ladies themselves as because they were,

he found, invariably the reflection of sentiments expressed by their male relatives and political friends. Even for the opinions of the ladies of the Imperial family he had but scant respect, and it is certain that had he lived to succeed to the throne, petticoat-intrigue would have had no place in the policies of the Empire ; while it is also certain that his very acute sense of external political trickery, which even in those days recognised how the enemies of Austria were using the heart-susceptibilities of old Kaiser Franz for their own ends, would have prevented the presence at the Court of Vienna of women who were practically spies in the pay of Bismarck, transmitting to the Wilhelmstrasze all kinds of information, or turning the mind of the ageing Monarch to counsels which were favourable to the Chancellor's schemes. The names of two of these favourites of the old Emperor cannot fail to recur to the minds of all who possess any knowledge of social and political currents in Vienna in the penultimate decade of the nineteenth century.

Among Berlin's chartered spies in Vienna, during the years with which I deal, one of the most prominent was a woman whose name I will give in such a form that any person who has a sense of phonetics, and who knew the Vienna of those days, will easily recognise the person in question. I will call her Baroness Larricarda, and refuse to give her proper name or title, at this juncture, for the reason that since

her exile from Vienna, after the death of the Archduke Rudolph, her struggle for an existence was, and still is said to be, a somewhat pitiful one. Viennese society, since the days of Austria's eclipse at Sadowa, had sought to conceal the injured patriotic emotions born of that disaster by affecting an hysterical sort of gaiety which was somewhat foreign to the real character of the people. In my opinion, your genuine Austrian approaches more to the racial types to be met in Belgium and Holland than to the Germans of the Confederation—that is to say, he is essentially a serious person, for all his *abandon* on joyous and festive occasions—and to my way of thinking he is as keen in commercial transactions as a Hebrew or a Scot. And so, like all forced characteristics, the new-found frivolity of the Viennese degenerated quickly into a positive mania of wickedness, without, at the same time, taking on any of the picturesque artistry which conceals—and often condones—the refined viciousness of Parisians—citizens, also, who, after 1870, went through for many years a phase of social madness similar to that which affected Austria. About the years of which I write, Viennese society was probably the most dissipated in Europe, and so became a happy mart for ladies of that type which serves the foibles of a prince.

The position of the Baroness—for her original social standing was unquestioned—remains another indication of the marvellous change which was taking place in Viennese society, a change which

eventually drove myself and many of my friends, in sheer disgust of the new conditions prevailing, from our capital. Larricarda had made it her system to support the ambitions of the new arrivals, armed with vast wealth, but poor in pedigree and antecedent; and, as in every other capital in the world, it soon came about that those whose purses were long eventually called the tune to the leaders of the *grand monde*—not wholly so, of course, but to a large extent. The result of this in Vienna, as in other capitals of the world, was to create an important enough intervening social stratum which became known as Smart Society, and which had so much in the way of gaiety, versatility and *abandon* to recommend it that it attracted elements from all classes of the Viennese world—many of the high-born not less than the new-rich. Larricarda's *salon* became consequently a thoroughly cosmopolitan one, and though it was non-political, it affected a certain democratic sentiment and tone which not only sat well upon its adherents, but which also made it a refreshing rendezvous for men and women of the greater world, who were long sated with age-old conventions and formalisms.

Having said that the Baroness Larricarda acted in reality in venal ways for the Habsburg Princes, it is only right for me to add that this fact was known only to such persons as could be said to move within the Imperial circle, whether as important officials or else as familiars of the Court. It is, of course, giving away no special information

when I say that there is not a Court in Europe, or in Asia, for that matter, which is not also served in this respect by venal spirits among its great *mondaines*. The Pompadours, the Montespans and Dubarrys did not all pass away with the golden age of Versailles and the Trianon; on the contrary, like the Jews, they are always available. Baroness Larricarda was, it must be admitted, a woman of great social ability and tact, and Rudolph, to whom the democratic tone and almost *vaudeville* gaiety of her routs at once appealed, became the most consistent patron of her *salon*, as he was also its most illustrious. The Vetsera family were not habitués of Larricarda's receptions, and so her house became easily the favourite rendezvous for the Archduke Rudolph and Marie Vetsera. To myself, as well as to the intimate male circle of Rudolph, the Baroness showed much kindness, and at her receptions I rarely failed to meet one or more of my master's most intimate friends—Hoyos, Bombelles, Neumann, Udel, Teleki, Potocki, Wilczek Weilen, Jokai and several more.

Although not a lover of social functions of any kind, and much preferring the company of well-read and travelled men of the world, I made it my business to put in an appearance at Larricarda's as often as I cared to do so; for as an intimate of the Archduke my standing became that of a *Hausfreund*. The reason for this abrupt change in my social habits, as far as the Baroness's house was concerned, arose from the fact that her

establishment also became an unusually frequent rendezvous of the German diplomatic body in Vienna. I say unusually, because owing to the attitude of the Archduke towards Germans—and my master was as generous in putting in an appearance at important and, indeed, unimportant houses, as his friend the Prince of Wales, in London—they were only as a rule very sparsely represented at receptions outside those given by the Emperor or the Ambassadors. Socially, indeed, the German, more particularly the Prussian, has never counted for much in our Capital, and the reason for this is that, taking their cue from the Hohenzollern Princes, whose attitude towards all other European Princes of the Blood is not less insolent than it is farcical—for they are the least exalted by birth of any royal House in Europe, except possibly that of Sweden—your German assumes in the great society of the various capitals which I have visited a poseful affectation of superiority which might be excused if it were accompanied by anything like an easy assumption of the part, and not marked by the elaborate effort which he invariably puts forth in his attempt to enact the rôle—a pose which reminds me altogether of members of the American so-called Four Hundred when they endeavour, in acting the part of ladies and gentlemen, to simulate that unconsciousness of manner which characterises your well-bred European of either sex.

Nor was I much pleased to note that among

the Prussian gentry who attended the Baroness's receptions the majority of them gave themselves the airs of men who to some extent possessed a hold over their hostess, and I have often noted that your German, unlike most other men, is wholly unable to forgo the petty delights which presumably spring from openly displaying towards a victim the consciousness of having that victim in one's power. As I have said, the Baroness was at that time always friendly to myself, and I was far from feeling at ease when I noted the attitude of certain of these Berlin habitués towards her, an attitude on which Udel and Bombelles more than once remarked on leaving the place.

Beyond the notoriety inseparable from a socially gay house, few persons in Vienna in those days knew that it was the rendezvous of the Archduke and his inamorata, so that no open scandal whatever attached to the establishment of Baroness Larricarda at the period of which I speak. The hostess, as far as I could gather, was of a dilapidated squirearchic family in the Vorarlberg region, and had married a sporting man who had a varying success on the German Turf and who was also said to be interested in several of the minor music halls of our capital. Up till 1887, their social life had been less important, and it was only in the opening of that year that the *salon* Larricarda began to attain a notoriety as a rendezvous of great gaiety, and people began to whisper that successful Turf speculation had refilled the exchequer of the

sporting Baron. Certain it is that from 1887 till the end of 1888 profuseness never seemed to inconvenience the hostess of that most hospitable of houses.

It was here one night that, much to my surprise, I was accosted by my old schoolfellow Koinoff. Much to my surprise, I repeat, for any house which was honoured habitually by the presence of the Crown Prince Rudolph might have been considered an unlikely place at which to encounter a social waif and strayling of the type of Koinoff. It is to be remembered, however, that he had been an attaché of the Berlin Foreign Office, and the fact recurred to my memory as he so unexpectedly introduced himself. There was a vague and troubled air about the old Feldkirchian which was in severe contrast with his airy demeanour and brave attitude when I had last met him in Berlin, and he appeared, I half fancied, to shrink under my somewhat close scrutiny, for, to repeat myself again, his presence there fairly made me wonder.

"You are on a visit, I suppose?" was my natural question.

"On the contrary," he replied; "I have come back to stay."

"And the Chancellor? Did you find him a hard master?" I inquired.

"I met the Chancellor only once," Koinoff said; "and that was when he transferred my services to Galimberti."

"What, the Nuncio?" I asked, in some wonder-

ment, for this prelate had been the Roman Nuncio in Vienna and had not distinguished himself by a very sympathetic attitude towards Austria. Indeed, at that time there was talk of his being transferred to Berlin, where he was a frequent visitor to Prince Bismarck.[1]

"Not altogether to the service of the Nuncio himself," Koinoff explained; "but to his Nunciature here. Galimberti is booked for Berlin, they say."

"So I have heard," was my answer; "but are you still in the service of Petri, of whom you told me in Berlin?"

"My dear friend," the old Feldkirchian replied, "it was a matter of money with me, and I had, in any case, the option of remaining in Berlin or coming home. The Vatican people can pay me a better price, evidently, and Bismarck permitted the transfer to oblige his friend the Nuncio. There is a lack of linguists here, and, like yourself, I am acquainted with Italian. Besides, after all, this is my country, and *entre nous*, I am not in love with the Prussian. Again, I was glad to leave Berlin for one particular reason, and that was because their sportsmen gamble much too high for the purse of an irregular attaché. I was under a cloud—riddled with debts, my dear fellow, and glad to escape the Jews."

The Archduke was absent from Vienna about

[1] This prelate was subsequently promoted to the Cardinalate.—EDITOR.

that time, and was not expected home till we should be due to leave for London in June 1887. Accordingly I had taken up residence, during my master's absence, at a suite of rooms I had long held in town. On consideration, too, I made it good policy to see something of my old school-fellow Koinoff. We therefore walked together to my lodging, where we drank a bottle of wine and discussed the old days at Feldkirch, on which topic, I may say, Koinoff, the ex-scholastic, did not fail to prove amusing.

CHAPTER IX

Some Capitals compared—London that was—Anglo-French Characteristics—Social Changes in England and Some Causes—Queen Victoria's Jubilee of 1887—The Archduke's Party in Paris—His Attitude towards Subordinates—Reception by the English Court—Attitude of British People towards their Royal Family—Upper, Middle and Lower Classes—Women's Social Mania—The Archduke and Prince William of Prussia—An Apt Retort

EVER since I learned, in my teens, to know London I have retained a large affection for the English capital. Berlin, in my opinion, is the cleanest city in the world, and Florence the most beautiful; Paris within the past twenty-five years has degenerated and become scandalously filthy; Vienna, where I have not lived, nor even visited, since the month following the death of the Archduke Rudolph, February 1889, always recurs to me as an attempt to turn an old Flemish city into a modern capital by interspersing its archaic structures with spectacular edifices of the Renaissance type. You can find within its circumference all the historic phases of the Holy Roman Empire—later-Roman, Gothic, Venetian, Frank, Dutch and Flemish—with always that suggestion of the barbaric which you begin to feel everywhere east and south of Berlin. The people of Berlin remind me of prosperous agricultural folk endeavouring to play at being ladies

and gentlemen; those of Paris are as keen and unscrupulous as Jews; the natives of Vienna are too servilely polite to be sincere, and outside Milan, I have no love for Italians—the Janus-headed race. In London alone, of all capitals, I used to find men natural, straightforward, unpretentious and dignified. I say I used to find them so, for many changes have taken place in the character of London and Londoners of all classes, grades and degrees, since I first knew both, as a man of the world, in the eighties of the nineteenth century. From the death of my master I have lived in Italy, but have contrived to visit London—where I am still a member of the St James's Club—once in every two or three years.

The most salient characteristic I have noted in Londoners during the past fifteen years is the extent to which they have become Gallicised. Many of my English friends who know America—I have not visited that country, myself—assure me that the English have become Americanised rather than Gallicised, and that the resemblance between the Americans and the French is much more pronounced than is suspected by those who do not know America.[1] Not knowing America, I am at a certain disadvantage; but with regard to the English people, I cannot help noting that while much of the stolidity which marked the

[1] As a result of the War of Independence and that of 1812, Americans certainly became very Francophile in their sympathies, and correspondingly hostile to English ideas.—EDITOR.

time-honoured English types has passed into the possession of the French, many of the lighter characteristics of the people of France have become common to Englishmen and Englishwomen. Yet I cannot see that the exchange of characteristics has advantaged the English even to the extent of bringing to them any of the artisticity of the French character, and I feel bound to say that a certain affectation of French airs and *petites manières*, which of recent years I have marked in both Englishmen and Englishwomen, is not, as acting, less lamentable a failure than, in the eyes of those who observe intelligently, it appears ludicrous in the extreme.

I find myself, indeed, in excellent English company when I declare that English literature, drama, journalism, opera, and even scholarship, have all deteriorated; that its parliamentary life has become but the pale ghost of a great glory; that English institutionalism is a vanishing quantity; that the spirit of the last unwholesome generation has been the spirit of the charlatan and the pretender; and that all this has happened in the past twenty-five years. Friends of mine, mostly old schoolfellows of my English days, have tried to explain matters to me on the hypothesis that free education was prematurely given to a people which was, in its then ignorant condition, incapable of assimilating it by a properly graduated process, or rational series of steps. The result was the upsetting of social equilibria. I am willing to admit all the vicious

possibilities of intellectual cramming in the case of people who, in the great bulk, have, educationally speaking, inherited nothing, and the brain as well as the body looks for its inheritance. I have, nevertheless, another opinion on the matter, and have heard it from those who were in a position to know the mind of Berlin that a set policy of those who have directed the destinies of Germany since the fall of Bismarck was based largely on the fact that England was commercially a non-protected country; it was hoped by means of industrial competition to reduce wage-earners to the starvation stage, a condition which must react on the physique of that class from which the Army and Navy are principally drawn.

As a visitor to England in 1903, I was a witness of the acute phases of that terrible poverty of which Berlin militarism always dreamed as certain to lead to that national unrest and rebelliousness upon which they calculated for the realisation of their ambition to "square their account" with a practically effete and disrupted nation. All classes in England suffered by the policy of Berlin; unrest was everywhere, and everywhere English ideals were being steadily undermined by the forces working for their destruction. As an Austrian I have heard from relatives how, before our downfall at Sadowa, similar policies were put into operation with the same sinister purposes and effects in our own country; and as a "retired" Austrian, if I may use a phrase which jumps to mind, I am a happy spectator of the

certain doom of Prussian designs in the case of Britain. Further, as I am neither writing of my own country nor yet living in it, I venture to play the rôle of prophet when I declare it my belief that the past prosperity of England will prove, once Militarism is destroyed, to have been as mediocre compared with that which must ultimately open for all classes of her sons. Yet I never expect to see again that leisurely and stately England of 1887.

Travelling orders and preparations were given and executed very rapidly on the eve of our visit to England in June of the Jubilee Year. We spent a day incognito in Paris, where, as he never failed to do, the Archduke visited the Tomb of Napoleon,[1] there to indulge in some mystical reflections, as was his wont in all things concerned with that most formidable adversary of the House of Habsburg. The afternoon was spent with General de Gallifet, one of the most intimate of the Archduke's French acquaintances, and the evening saw us on our way to England. Our journey to Paris had not, I may say, been of the pleasantest, for the Crown Prince had left Vienna in the worst temper which, as far as my experience went, I had yet witnessed in him. Certain arrangements which had been made for a protracted stay in the English capital had, owing to

[1] The reflection is startling enough—Bonaparte was by marriage the grand-uncle of this scion of a hundred Imperial Habsburgers! It is hardly less startling to reflect that Bonaparte himself became, by his marriage with Marie Louise, a *nephew-in-law* of Louis XVI.—EDITOR.

unexpected objections on the part of Kaiser Franz, perforce to be cancelled, the whole visit being consequently curtailed save as to the central ceremonies concerned with Queen Victoria's celebrations.

The originally proposed visit was to have lasted, if I remember correctly, a fortnight; we were to have renewed our acquaintance with the English Turf and arrangements had been made for the Archduke to inspect the famous racer Bendigo, while purely academic visits had been planned to several museums containing ornithological treasure, a science in which my master was deeply interested. Among these academic visits, one in particular does not escape me, for it concerned the meeting of the Archduke with a certain Mr Ricardo, then sojourning very unpretentiously in London; this name disguised the personality of one of the most learned men of his age—namely, Prince Lucien Bonaparte, a son of that famous Lucien Bonaparte whose great political abilities made him a source of much envy and fear to his omnipotent brother. This engagement, as the event proved, was the only one which the Archduke insisted on keeping under the curtailed programme. The visit had been planned with a view to discussing the historical value of certain coins which during a hunting-trip the Prince had unearthed at Meyerling in the previous winter.

To repeat myself, then, Rudolph had left Vienna in the worst of tempers, and it was only by our arrival at Paris that he had recovered the

usual serenity of his disposition. Towards those whom he disliked I have seen him display so forbidding a demeanour that I have positively felt ashamed to have to witness it; and my uncle has declared himself in the same way regarding old Kaiser Franz, whose occasional ferocity of temper towards tried servants of State one would hardly suspect in so benign-looking a monarch. Towards those whom he liked, on the other hand, Rudolph was as a comrade, a characteristic he no doubt acquired from his years of military service, and officers who served at Prague with his first regiment—the 36th Infantry—have assured me that no regiment in our Service had ever had a more popular subaltern. Unlike the men of the Hohenzollern family, who were, in those days, known for their inhumanity to their body servants, I doubt if any prince ever treated those who served him in a menial capacity with greater kindness than the Archduke, a trait, I was assured, which also characterised Kaiser Franz in his relations with humbler dependents.

The story of the first famous Jubilee of the illustrious Victoria has been written in history. I was privileged also to witness that of 1897, and in the way of Imperial pageants each of them established a record of which the proper chroniclers have duly told. My countrymen, I rejoice to be able to say, have always been received with favour by the English of all classes, and in the case of the Archduke Rudolph I may say that the reigning Queen-Sovereign displayed towards him

a cordiality far greater than one might have expected from her towards a prince of my master's somewhat hectically coloured life. I am, however, with Lord Byron in regard to the preconceptions formed by women, and believe with the English poet that at heart every woman is a rake—matron just as much as maid. I have had the privilege of studying royal women at closer range than is afforded most men, and cannot see that there is less human nature in a princess than in a woman of ordinary rank; indeed, I have heard my august master declare that there was very much more, and he was certainly entitled to know. To all women the Archduke was an object of much curiosity, owing to his reputation; a reputation, I may say, which exaggerated his iniquities with about the same facile untruthfulness as modern rumour overestimates the fortunes of the great spectacular plutocrats, who, of course, have no objection to people thinking them many times richer than they are. It was a source of much pleasure to our Austrian contingent in London to note the great respect which on all hands was given to the personal representative at Victoria's Jubilee, of the most splendidly historic throne in the world. For all his superb exterior, no such deference was paid to the Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia—without question the most imposing figure in the memorable Jubilee cavalcade—as was accorded to the somewhat simple, silent and unaffected heir of Imperial Austria.

Here I must record, as chronologically due, a conversation with which the Archduke indulged me respecting the peculiar demeanour of ladies of the middle classes in England towards their Royal Family. The attitude of Englishmen of all classes towards their Princes seems to be one of somewhat frigid reverence, arising, no doubt, from the physical and psychical strain, due to the act of violently suppressing emotions—a characteristic of the Englishman. In most monarchical countries, in which the principle of aristocracy prevails, there is, in my experience, a much more cordial understanding between the lowest class and the highest class than between the highest and the intervening orders. It is so in Austria, where men of great position are frequently to be found on terms of considerable intimacy with intelligent men in the lower orders of the social system.

In England I have noted the same phenomenon, and have witnessed with pleasure very friendly intercourse on the part of great nobles towards men in inferior positions in life; towards the middle classes, the same nobles observe an attitude of frigid aloofness which only the most spiritless and servile of creatures can tolerate without open resentment; on the other hand, the lowest orders display, as regards the *parvenu* classes, a demeanour not lacking in respect, but covertly eloquent of question and criticism. In Continental countries known to my experience I have never seen, among their middle classes, anything of the servility towards the upper, and more particularly

the princely order, which I have noted on the part of Englishwomen who have social ambitions; and it was a saying of the Archduke Rudolph, who admitted its derivation from his friend the Prince of Wales, that if a woman of the British upper-middle class were offered a choice between the kingdom of Heaven and presentation at Court, there would be no upper-middle class British females in paradise.

His Highness, who knew English literature extremely well, went on to quote the philosophy of some English poet whose name I do not now remember; the quotation was to the effect that while Love is only a small consideration in the life of a man, it is woman's whole existence. With so *banal* a verdict as this the Archduke could not, he confessed, at all agree, and I admit I remain entirely of his mind. He could not, he declared, believe in the so-called goodness of woman just because she was a woman, any more than he could think that a woman became an angel because she produced a child; nor did he think woman had any monopoly of that goodness upon which true love must be founded—self-sacrifice, mainly. Consequently, he could not accept it that she had only one object in life—love.

She had other objects in life, most of them the reverse of spiritual—namely, dress, social prominence and the vanities attaching to these ambitions, and if all this was due to her desire to encourage men, then woman was in reality

no better than she ought to be. Even mother's love in the majority of cases was, he thought, based on the hope of renewing through the children the hopes of one's youth and shining in the reflection of any brilliancy that might accrue to one's offspring—also a material ambition, as the history of family divisions, small as well as great, went far to show; such divisions being due in nearly all cases to the inspiration and worthlessness of the woman as a wife and a mother. All of which led my master naturally to conclusions which were later to receive a certain indoctrination in the work[1] of a young Viennese Jew, Otto Weininger, who, as it happened, only expressed views which had long been held in common by the Archduke Rudolph, Professor Udel, Baron Neumann and, if I may add it, by myself.

On our return to Vienna a few days after the Jubilee celebrations had concluded, a story had, we found, preceded us, and obtained currency in several papers. I give the substance of the various versions here, and can personally add my testimony to the general correctness of the statements made; for though not present at the royal table at the house in question, I was with Hoyos an invited guest, and in any case, in the course of the day, the story obtained full currency.

[1] Obviously the work entitled *Geschlecht und Charakter*, which created a sensation on its appearance. Its author committed suicide.—EDITOR.

Among those who represented Prussia at the Jubilee of 1887 was Prince William of Prussia, who had accompanied his illustrious father, the Crown Prince Frederick, on the occasion of this great family gala. On the day following the Jubilee celebrations the Archduke Rudolph and Prince William, with several younger royal Princes, were among the guests at a lunch given by one of the most distinguished and probably at that time one of the wealthiest members of the English House of Peers. Conversation at international royal gatherings is, as a rule, of the least political kind, there being a fixed convention that all references to serious political questions shall be taboo, as, indeed, a common sense of diplomatic decencies would itself suggest. It has been told how, during the Jubilee celebrations, the Archduke Rudolph had been accorded a reception at the hands of British officialdom, the respectful cordiality attaching to which had far exceeded that shown to the representative Prussian Princes.

At all events it may have been the cause of a certain chagrin to Prince William of Prussia, who, according to what I learned at the time, and just after the episode, from one of the Karolyi Embassy, directed his efforts with unusual persistency towards a discussion of political matters connected with the growing national-party movement in Austria, at the head of which, as everybody knew, was the Archduke Rudolph himself. Although I heard nothing from His Highness himself on the subject,

I was assured that the tone adopted towards the Archduke was not only aggressive and derisive, but was meant to be publicly offensive towards Austria, and in such a way that English listeners should not fail to learn a lesson therefrom. With unheard-of boorishness, the Prussian sought to point out to the Archduke, to the consternation of all present, the hopelessness of Austria ever attempting to rise again to the power she had once held in Europe, and, he suggested, the movement towards the formation of a national party in Austria could have no other inspiration. The Austrian Empire, he urged, hung together only by virtue of the fact that Kaiser Franz had already reigned nearly forty years. It would not and could not, he declared with vehemence, survive his death; at that event the disruption of the Habsburg dominions was certain to come about, all the more so because Austria, he concluded, lacked leaders of statesmanlike quality.

"All of which points to the certainty," said the Archduke, with pleasant dubiety, "that on the death of the Emperor Francis we may expect to receive a visit from your Armies?"

"The permanent arrival of Germany to the headship of Germanic Europe is not less clearly written in the stars than is the settled decadence of other rivals within the same field," replied the Prussian; "and when the hour strikes, my country will know how to secure the welfare of the Teuton races in Europe, by giving them the benefit of Prussia's genius for governing."

"Then, that being the case," replied the Archduke pointedly, "and as your Highness appears so sure of the facts, I, for one heir to a throne, do not desire the death of *my* father."

The retort, meeting the aggressor so aptly, silenced the Prussian Prince very effectually.

CHAPTER X

I go into Chambers in Vienna during my Master's Absence—An Unexpected Visit from Koinoff—A Question of Finance—Koinoff's Nationality—His Career, Present and Past—I am willing to accommodate him—Koinoff as "Tommy Atkins"—How he beat a Prussian Spy—Koinoff and his Honour—A Success at Cards

In the autumn of 1887 the Crown Prince retired to Meyerling for a season's sport, granting me *congé* during his absence. Accordingly I took up residence in my chambers close by the Hofgarten, with the fixed determination of setting about an enterprise I had long contemplated—namely, a German version of Thackeray's inimitable *Barry Lyndon*. But, bless you, *Dis aliter visum*—the gods had decided otherwise, and I had hardly been installed when my troubles broke out. On the first evening of my arrival into private quarters, Bratfisch announced the presence of my old schoolfellow Koinoff. According to my policy, I decided to see the ex-Feldkirchian whose ill-concealed troubled air on our last meeting had called up a chord of latent sympathy which I had somewhat unaccountably discovered on his behalf. Like the practised man of the world he was, Koinoff took no lengthy time to disclose the motive of his business, for hardly had he seated himself than he put the question to me straight.

"I am in trouble," he said; "can you lend me some money?"

My own financial circumstances had improved considerably since my attachment to the service of the Archduke, who was no less generous as an employer than he was punctual as a payer—to his employees. Also my run of luck with the horses, at home and abroad, had continued fairly good up to date, and the Archducal coterie, acting on information which the ever-faithful Kinsky transmitted me from London, had included Roquefort and Merry Hampton among very fortunate speculations since our previously noted success at Liverpool in the previous spring. My balance was decidedly on the right side, and as I studied the pale and worn face of my old schoolfellow, I made a mental resolve that he should not go away unrelieved of his anxieties, if, within reason, I could help him. Besides, I had an end in view.

"As you may guess," I replied, "my means are somewhat limited and my expenses not light; but if you will give me some idea of the extent of your requirements, I will see."

"I have already given you, I think, a fair idea of the situation," he replied; "but it is worse than I suggested to you on our meeting in June last—has unfortunately grown worse, and the Jews are not less relentless than my luck is black. I am badly pressed for fifteen thousand gulden (£1500) and see no way of getting that sum, if you should find yourself unable to help me."

This was a much larger sum than I had ever lent to a friend, and, even in the existing prosperous enough condition of my account, would have meant a heavy draught on my resources.

"May I ask," I inquired, in (as I felt) the tone of one who is of opinion that he is entitled to cross-examine, "how you came to contract liabilities to this extent? Bismarck's department is noted, I think, for its scant treatment of employees. The Vatican paymasters are also known for their parsimony, I have always understood."

"I am not," replied the Feldkirchian, "an amateur of the race-horse method of gambling, as you may, or may not know. Cards have been my particular form of the vice, and I have lost so heavily to the Prussian contingent which, as you know, visits so frequently at Madame Larricarda's, that I am actually beginning to fear for my soul."

"And the Nunciature—is it known there that you gamble your substance for the benefit of the Prussian contingent?" I inquired.

"You are aware," replied Koinoff, "to what extent the German Embassy and the Nunciature are *en liaison*. They know that I am a visitor at Larricarda's, and indeed I am obliged to the secretary of the Nunciature for the wherewithal to indulge my tastes. He is my creditor to a considerable extent, though he has given me unlimited time."

"Under certain conditions, of course; or rather obligations?" I suggested.

"M'yes, if you will," answered Koinoff vaguely; "but they are not definite obligations. I am not bound to compromise myself or anyone else, you see."

"They may not look to you to compromise anyone else," I objected. "It may be sufficient for them that you compromise yourself with them. Has that not occurred to you? To visit at Baroness Larricarda's, where your standing among the habitual guests there can only be one of uncertainty, may or may not compromise you; but to gamble with men who are not only a thousand times wealthier than yourself but who also always win your money, as you admit by implication—that, my dear Koinoff, is compromising yourself very deeply. You do not, I presume, think that the Nunciature is supplying you with money wherewith to gamble, solely out of pure love of yourself—do you?"

"As some proof that I am not exactly such a fool," replied the Feldkirchian, "I have just admitted to you that I feared actually for my soul—I still believe to that extent."

"In other words, then, I am to understand," I suggested, "that you consider yourself to be the victim of a conspiracy which is seeking to involve you so deeply that you must in the end find yourself forced to—m'render service, shall we say?"

"You have put the position into words,"

replied my old schoolfellow; "and now you know why I am here. What is it we used to say at Feldkirch—*non cuivis contigit adire Corinthum*. We cannot all get to Corinth; but surely none of us is required to go to Hell. I have already gone a long way in that direction, but I stop at giving a mortgage on my soul."

"And if you are successful in finding your fifteen thousand gulden—what then?"

"I become at once a candidate for manumission, dear boy; I buy myself fifteen thousand gulden worth of liberty, and become a free man. In other words, I return to the simple life."

"Well, my dear Koinoff," said I, "I can promise you your required sum; so relieve your mind on that score. But let me ask you: of what nationality would you call yourself?"

"How can you ask? As an old Feldkirchian, like yourself, I am an Austrian," he replied.

"But," I objected, "as an ex-agent of the Berlin Foreign Office, you are also a Prussian."

"Tut," came the ready explanation, "in the service of Berlin no birth-certificates are required. All Bismarck asks is a certificate of character, and it must be a certificate of *bad* character at that. You see, my friend, I was not, like yourself, *porphyrogenitus*, as we used to call it at Feldkirch—not born in the purple, and had to make my own way. Did I ever tell you, for instance, that I was a private of Field Artillery in the service of Queen Victoria? No. Well, you see,

I was, as it happens; but I am not, for all that, a British subject. Like yourself, I am proficient in the language of Shakespeare, and in London they could never tell I was a foreigner until after the *n*th bottle, when my *t*'s and *d*'s used to quarrel for precedence, and then they took me for a German. Well, in London once I met an agent of the Berlin Secret Service who, knowing my proficiency in the vernacular, offered me the then very acceptable sum of one hundred pounds if I would enlist in the Field Artillery and find out certain details concerning guns, which he was anxious to obtain for the Headquarters Staff in Berlin. I did not like my gentleman very much, and was angry that he should have taken me to be one of his own kidney. I determined, therefore, to teach him a lesson and at the same time do a little business on my own account, for I was hard up and wanted money badly.

"I therefore agreed to his terms, stipulating for an advance of some twenty pounds in case of accident, so that I should be able to purchase my discharge—which is ten pounds under three months' service in England. I was at once and without question accepted, and began my training at Woolwich, and after a few weeks my friend began to worry me hard to find out things. He was pressed, he told me, for the information, and I began to reflect that if, as I could easily have done, I obtained and gave him the information he required, I might have to whistle for my money—if faces went for anything. So I began

to remain in barracks of evenings and refused to go into town after duty hours. My friend, as I expected, began to write me little notes, begging me to come and visit him, and anyone with an eye for calligraphy could tell that the writer had been made in Germany. This was exactly what I wanted. One evening I issued forth and he took me to his rooms—an elaborate suite—and then some fun began. I wore the heavy artillery-man's cloak, and in one of the pockets had put a service revolver. On the way to his rooms I informed him that I had all the information he should ever require about British ordnance. When we reached his lodgings he divested himself of his overcoat, seated himself at his writing-desk and prepared to hear the tale. And as he comfortably fixed himself in his chair, I drew the revolver and covered him.

"'Hands up!' I cried; 'I am an English detective.' The hands went up with typical Prussian obedience almost before my man had recovered his senses.

"'Good,' I said; 'you just keep them up and let me examine your pockets.' I examined his pockets, but could find no revolver. Knowing the Prussian Secret Service man, however, I also knew he would not travel without arms.

"'Where is your revolver?' I demanded, advising him at the same time to keep his hands at high level. He motioned to his overcoat, and in it I found a six-chamber, which I pocketed.

"'Now,' I commanded, 'walk over to that corner by the door, and turn your face to the wall. Keep your hands up. When I have examined your valise and pocket-book I will let you know what o'clock it is.' His keys were on the table and I had already taken a wallet from his breast-pocket. In both I found bank-notes worth over two hundred pounds, besides letters and post cards, all of Berlin origin. When I had pocketed the bank-notes and documents, I again commanded him to turn about—still hands up. Then I took stock of the room, a second-floor front parlour with only one door, the windows overlooking a steep area with spiked railings, as I already knew. He would never, I was certain, risk his life by trying to jump for it.

"There was a free space to the opposite angle of the room, and I commanded him to walk to it. Taking the key from the door, I inserted it on the outside. Still covering him with my revolver, I advised him to make no attempt to escape, pending the arrival of the police, turned the key in the door and left the house. I had my Prussian both ways, for I knew he would not dare to denounce me, and as I also had his money safe in pocket, concluded that he had been severely enough punished. I consequently did not trouble the police, and I knew he would not. The next day I put down a ten-pound note for my discharge, and within a week was back in London. The Spartan morality of this transaction may, of course, be open to question, but when this Prussian scoundrel

took me for a spy I felt sorely hurt in my honour —but why this sudden hilarity ? "

" Let us not try to pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon, as a certain great poet puts it, Koinoff. Let us be serious. Do you know Count Bombelles ? "

" I have seen him at Galimberti's, but never met him."

" Would you like to meet him ? If you wish, he can be very useful to you, and as you are leaving the Nunciature, you will probably require useful friends. Can you meet me, say, about five o'clock to-morrow evening ? He may be here then, but, of course, I cannot say definitely. In any case, come ; and supposing him to be here, I advise you to say nothing about your departure from Feldkirch or your adventures in England. I will make things very smooth for you, and you will be far better with us than with the Nuncios. As to your cheque—if there is nothing very pressing, I will let you have one to-morrow night for the sum you mention."

The Feldkirchian having assured me that there was nothing pressing in regard to his financial difficulties for the moment, we drew our meeting to a close with a promise to meet on the following afternoon.

In the sequel, I lost nothing by my advance to Koinoff, since Bombelles, who in such matters —he was Rudolph's Lord Chamberlain—was master of the Archducal Exchequer, reimbursed me on the ground of private expenditure on behalf

of the Crown Prince. Koinoff passed into our service, although Bombelles flatly decided that he should retain his position at the Nunciature and continue to visit at Baroness Larricarda's establishment. The old Feldkirchian was advised, however, to avoid the card-tables, and he promised to do so, although, in connection with his surrender of this especial vice of his, he was the cause of a characteristic and amusing enough episode. Among the Germans who had won most of the Pole's money was a military attaché named von Duglas, said to be of Scottish origin and particularly keen in money matters. He it was who had caused the old Feldkirchian to visit the Jews, and apparently the attaché had looked forward to a successful winning season with the member of the Nunciature. Koinoff had, I knew, lost to him fifteen thousand gulden, all of which had been faithfully paid over. About the time he had arranged to come into the private service of Bombelles he had also discovered, in the ordinary course of perusing correspondence from Berlin, that it was the intention of the Foreign Office in the Wilhelmstrasze to recall Duglas, who was to be replaced by another military attaché, one of the Waldersee family, I think; the new arrival was due to report for duty in Vienna on 1st October, while Duglas would in due course be notified to return to Berlin on exactly the same date.

The latter had, I was assured by his intended victim, been continually pestering the

Feldkirchian to resume play, and refused to accept Koinoff's decision to give up the cards. By questioning him, the Pole discovered that, as late as the evening of 30th September, Duglas was as yet in ignorance of his coming recall to Berlin, and as the military attaché still persisted in seducing him from his resolve, Koinoff decided to teach him a lesson. He could not, he told Duglas, afford the long runs of ill-luck which had followed him in former sessions at the card-table with the military attaché; besides, he added, he was no match scientifically for Duglas.

Nevertheless, to prove that he had not been chagrined by his losses, he would give the Prussian-Scot a set. As Koinoff foresaw, the astute Duglas allowed him the full length of his tether in the hope of winning everything back with interest on the following night, and as so often happens in such cases, the cards were wholly in the Pole's favour, the total result being that Duglas lost back to his old victim much more than the latter had just recently paid him. On return to his quarters, the Prussian attaché duly found the peremptory letter of recall to Berlin, his *revanche* as against Koinoff being thus adjourned indefinitely, much to our new recruit's advantage and pleasure.

CHAPTER XI

Kinsky arrives in Vienna—Occupies my Flat—We discuss the Crown Prince Frederick's Malady—Also the Future Kaiser, Wilhelm II.—His Napoleonomania—Professor Buckle's Ideas—Prince Henry of Prussia and a Danseuse—To Berlin for the Obsequies of the Emperor William I.—I meet Count Herbert Bismarck—Prince William's Dislike of Herbert—The Dismissal of Ministers considered—Napoleon's Mistakes—Fascination of all the Bismarcks—Herbert a Misanthrope—A Choice of Emperors—Hoping for the Best—I study some Enigmas—Meeting with Wolfram

FOR the New Year of 1888 "London" Kinsky, as we used to call him, on private affairs from England, arrived in Vienna. At his own suggestion, and during my absence on duties with the Archduke, he occupied my flat for his intended brief stay. Accordingly, and also for the reason that soon the Archduke began paying a round of private family and other visits, I was enabled to see more of my amiable friend than would have been possible in normal times. At the suggestion of the vigilant Bombelles, and acting upon information which Koinoff had given us as a result of his experience among the service-agents of Berlin, I made my visitor acquainted with the special precautions we had for some time been taking to watch the political currents, under-currents and cross-currents which made Berlin in those days the cynosure of much diplomatic speculation.

And of course the case of the Crown Prince

Frederick entered for a great consideration into our conversation, as indeed, it was a topic of much interest everywhere in Continental Europe, in view of the ambiguous personality and character of the prince who was to succeed him. Already as to the fatal nature of Frederick's malady there also existed much speculation and interested factions were all preparing against the possibilities hidden in a darkly apprehended future.

"St James's still talks of Rudolph's retort to Prince William," Kinsky observed one evening; "and there are many, I think, in London, as well as here and in Berlin, who consider that the innuendo touched truth. Yourself—what do you think?"

"The history of thrones has nearly always discovered opposition between reigning princes and their future successors," I replied. "The House of Hohenzollern has given proofs, throughout, of greater possibilities in this respect than any other dynasty, and has certainly shown more intrigue in its Crown Princes. And intrigue does not always stop at political opposition and personal hates. Parricides have been common enough in history, and I am not of those who think that mankind, including Crown Princes, *bien entendu*, has improved morally simply because we have several hundred more religions than in the ages when poison entered more publicly into political combinations."

"Everything is, of course, uncertain, and all this is mere speculation," said Kinsky, who was my senior by some years; "what is certain, however,

is that Prince William is the head of a small but select faction which is ambitious of seeing him reign, and few of them would object to any means which would give him a swift accession. He is not more popular in London than elsewhere, but there it is the general opinion that his advent to the throne at this time of his life will mean, first, as regards ourselves, completing the work of reducing Austria to the condition of a German State, an act from which Bismarck himself shrank after Sadowa; and secondly, as regards France, a renewal of the *attentat* of 1875, when consolidated Germany, but for the attitude of Russia and Britain, would have attacked her again. Bismarck is right, and knows why Antipater is not Philopater, as he puts it, the whole matter being one of personal ambition on the part of Prince William, who does not care how soon his sire is translated. Have you heard of his latest-found mania?"

"You mean the imitations in the style of Frederick the Great?" I suggested.

"No; still higher than that," replied Kinsky. "His most recent pose is Bonaparte, and the real reason why he was so long laid up at Charlottenburg was not because of his alleged illness, but because he had already gone the length of the requirements of the picture by shaving his upper lip—a breach of the military regulations, of course. His Consort, they tell, is suffering an especially bad time as a result of this Napoleonomania, and daily has to listen to querulous retorts of the

"ordinary-laws-do-not-apply-to-me" type—Bonaparte's stock excuse, you may remember, when Josephine used to discover him with strange women. But surely you have heard that Prince William imports all his vegetables and table-poultry from Ajaccio?"

"Indeed no! And why?" I inquired, in much wonderment.

"You surprise me, for it is known in London," returned Kinsky; "but it is a positive fact. Prince William has lately been reading the English historian of Civilisation, Professor Buckle. This luminary's central idea is that men derive their specific characteristics, mental, moral, physical, *und so weiter*, principally from the food on which they are "raised," as the Americans say. Thus the Chinese derive their temperamental calm, or stoicism, from the fact that their staple food is rice; on the same analogy, an Englishman derives his mental robustiousness and stamina from his devotion to beef; and when you reflect that the Prussian is practically brought up on pig and sauerkraut, you do not require to meditate any further on the causes which have made him not other than he is—if Buckle is right.

"Now observe: Prince William read the Professor's work and its ideas made an instantaneous appeal to his type of mentality. It was about the same time that he was excogitating his Napoleonic pose, and like most of the inspirations of genius, it flashed upon him that, given the logic of the Professor's hypothesis, Napoleon must have owed

much of his conquistadorial characteristics to the products of the soil upon which he lived for the first decade of his life. And the result is that almost everything William eats nowadays is directly imported from Corsica. But you appear to doubt me, my dear fellow? I assure you there is no cause to doubt what I say. I had it from Wolfram. You remember my young cousin Wolfram? He is a big fellow now, lives in Berlin, and is so enamoured of it that he threatens to die there—that is, of course, if he is not murdered there."

"I remember him well, a very pleasant youth. But why murdered?" I asked.

"Why, you see," replied Kinsky, slowly puffing his cheroot, "he has antagonised some important people in Berlin—Prince Henry the Navigator among them. You remember Christiane Stromberg, the operatic star?"

"I remember her," I replied; "the particular friend of Prince Henry, a very buxom Swede."

"Well, Christiane has deserted the Navigator—and for Wolfram. She and her Prince have quarrelled very badly, and the Swede threatens to tell all she knows if he persists in annoying her. As a financial speculation, Wolfram is well worth the exchange, for you know the Hohenzollern breed, and the boy is, in any case, far better off. But the worst aspect of the affair is that Christiane is seriously *éprise* of Wolfram; and in Berlin it is a bad thing when the Castle is despoiled, as they say there."

"Is there any particular reason for him to remain in Berlin? The world is wide," said I.

"There is no reason," replied Kinsky, "except his infatuation for the capital, for he does not like the natives, and is as anti-Prussian as Rudolph himself could desire. But he is like all our tribe, *hartnaeckig*—obstinate, and even the suggestion of danger cannot fail to keep him where he is if he decides that it will prove exciting to do so."

I was to meet my young friend Wolfram much sooner than I expected, and in connection with an event which took us, as representatives of Vienna, to the obsequies of the old Emperor William, who passed away in the early part of March 1888. On the day succeeding our arrival in the Prussian Capital, and during the early morning walk which I have not once missed in thirty-five years, I met Herbert Bismarck in the Gardens. He was certainly a most forbidding person to look at, and it was well known that Prince William of Prussia—by this time Crown Prince—was fairly unable to face the disconcerting fixity of look which characterised Bismarck Junior. Indeed, it is telling nothing that is not well known among diplomatic officials who knew Berlin then, that it was much less fear of the elder Bismarck—the old Emperor and even the Crown Prince Frederick were certainly in abject fear of his overmastering method and manner—than a sheer inability to face the younger, that moved William II., on his subsequent accession, to rid himself of the possibility of having to employ the latter by dismissing

the former, who in giving to his eldest-born the highly important post of Foreign Secretary —which he now held—had practically designated his successor in the greatest office in the State.

Neither is it any secret—more especially at this time—that the extravagant reputation which William II. has won since his accession has been due in the first place to a very ably organised personal press-agency, which keeps him well before the world; and in the second, to the undoubted fact that his ministers and chosen commanders are men who are afraid of him—a characteristic which he and all masters who choose the line of least resistance like to find in their subordinates. In this respect, both his grandfather and father clearly showed their possession of a higher and truer patriotism than Kaiser Wilhelm has ever shown; for much as the elders disliked their masterful and often contemptuous Chancellor, they fully realised their own puny importance for Germany beside him.

I trust I do not offend the historical intelligence of the reader on recalling that when Napoleon developed his mania for dismissing men who were able to face him and argue with him, the stability of his Empire came at once into question; and it is an interesting enough historical consideration that his decline coincided with the dismissal of his very ablest servant—Talleyrand. Indeed, one of the most human and pathetic cries which we hear from Napoleon in all his turbulent career is that of 1813, after Dresden, when he calls in vain for his

old Foreign Minister in the tragic words: "*Ah, si j'avais cet autre; il me tirerait bien d'affaire!*" [1]

There was certainly a wondrous fascination about all these Bismarcks when they cared to exert it; but it is also certain that in respect of their powers of fascination they were excellent economists. Charm which is always and for ever dispensing itself on all who come within the radius of its operations, in the end becomes about as effectual as the perennial optimism of those curious little beings who do not realise that it is the pessimists who rule the world—the men who seek in toil to forget that they are alive, and anent which M. de Voltaire has taught us something in his philosophy of cultivating one's garden. I have stated my opinion elsewhere that Herbert Bismarck was a natural misanthrope, though I feel bound to say that his dislike of mankind did not extend to its fairer portion. He had few male friends, and, like most men of ability, neither sought to extend his friendships, nor looked for that most cheaply achieved of all acquisitions—personal popularity. I had met him perhaps oftener than any other grand official of the Berlin world, and though under no illusions as to the depth of his regard for myself, had always found in him a cordiality and courtesy which much more important men of my acquaintance envied me. Our recognition was reciprocal.

[1] The analogy here suggested is obviously meant to have a general application to the policy of William II. as regards able servants; for had Bismarck been alive in August 1914, his age would have been nearly one hundred years!—EDITOR.

"You come under doubly melancholy circumstances," he said, in his high, "tearful" voice, so like his father's. "Indeed you may find it convenient to prolong your stay; the shadow of Death still remains."

I looked at him questioningly, and he answered, in very solemn tones:

"You have heard that the Emperor Frederick is also laid low? The Prince was summoned before dawn this morning. We are within an ace of two Imperial funerals. Has that ever happened in history, or is Berlin to establish the precedent?"

I confessed that I had never heard of the simultaneous burial of two sovereigns of the same dynasty.

"We had, of course, heard in Vienna," I said, "that the Emperor Frederick's case was very bad; but the latest reports there are that the surgeons can succeed in prolonging his life. I was at San Remo with the Archduke, and there the same opinion prevailed."

"These are fables, my friend. For my father's sake, as well as for Germany's, I would give my right arm that such might be the case. But it cannot be; his death is all but registered. We shall soon have a new Kaiser, and"—he added thoughtfully—"with the new man, new measures—who can say? What does the Archduke think?"

I was quite well aware what the Archduke thought about the matter, and had no misgivings whatever that the Bismarcks were perfectly well

acquainted with his view that, given the chance to live, there was some hope of prolonging the Emperor's life. The elder Bismarck feared that the overwhelming influence of the English Empress Frederick over her husband must mean the lessening of his own influence, if not his destruction; on the other hand, like most old men who have lorded it long, he overlooked the danger to himself of the accession of a vain youth like Prince William, still in his twenties. As often happens, however, with very strong men, Prince Bismarck feared the woman and favoured what he thought to be the less dangerous alternative—Prince William. Herbert Bismarck, on the contrary, nearer the age of the youthful Crown Prince, was better fitted to divine the intentions of the headstrong William, and realised that the true German patriotism of the Emperor Frederick was likely to override the influence of his English Consort. This at least he made clear to me, for in answer to his question as to what the Archduke thought, I replied, with just a touch of enigma:

"As an Austrian, Count, my master hopes for the best. All Europe, I think, wishes to see the Emperor Frederick reign."

"Well," he answered candidly, "when I told you that for my father's sake, as well as that of Germany, I would sacrifice my right arm, I too showed that I hope for the best. My father's policy towards Austria has always been the best policy. Do you know that the dead Emperor, to the very last, had his eyes fixed on Bohemia?

If the Emperor Frederick, who hates war, were given a long reign, my father's policy would endure. If he dies—ah, then I could certainly not hope for the best." And we parted.

I was sufficiently well acquainted with diplomatic ways and means to be aware that this expression of opinion by Count Herbert was not intended to remain locked up in the breast of the Archduke's personal secretary. The Bismarcks, both father and son, were first-class Prussians, and loved their country as religious men love their faith. And I knew that any " best policy " adopted as regards my own country arose in no way from sentimental consideration entertained by Bismarck towards the House of Habsburg. Indeed, had Russia replied favourably and fully to his advances in those days, the Austro-Hungarian Empire must long since have been dismembered. As it was, she served as the only effective buffer state between Russia and Germany, and Bismarck was a past master in making virtuous acts, which were forced upon him by sheer policy, to appear as if they sprang from conscientious and honourable motives.

So, then, what was I to think? Was this a warning from Bismarck, voiced through his son, to the Archduke Rudolph, that in view of the certain doom of the Emperor Frederick, and the succession of a prince with William's known proclivities and ambitions, Germany would regard as openly hostile to herself all attempt to promote a strong national democratic movement

among the peoples of the Dual Monarchy, and would present Austria with the alternative of war in case of her refusal to fall in with the Chancellor's views as to what was most suited to her internal policies? Or was the conversation suggested by the elder Bismarck to his ever-filial son, with the object of destroying any suspicions that all was not well in the consulting-rooms of those who had the charge of preserving, if they could, the life of the Emperor Frederick?

Meditating these enigmas, and much immersed in them, I felt a friendly hand laid upon my shoulder, and on turning beheld the person I was most anxious to see—Wolfram.

"My cousin has written to me several times from London," he said. "I know you want to talk."

CHAPTER XII

San Remo's Crowd of Notables—Physicians and Surgeons—Sir Morell Mackenzie—Political Aspects of Frederick's Malady—His Consort's Intervention—What History will say of Frederick's Death—Bismarck's Russophilism—An Imperial Counsel—Bismarck's Press-Agency Work—Austrian and English Views—Foresight of Two Heirs-Apparent—Real Greatness of King Edward—A Romanoff Grand Duke—Rudolph's Independence of Character—German Gutter-Press Stories—The Archduke's Title to Respect—His Versatility—An Essay and Some Correspondence

BEFORE visiting Berlin, two important visits were made by the Archduke Rudolph, who was accompanied by Count Potocki and myself; one to San Remo, where many royal and imperial notabilities had assembled, among them the Prince of Wales and also Prince William of Prussia, whose sire was already in residence at this time, under the care of that group of physicians of whom mention has been made in previous chapters. I am not especially a believer in physicians of what is called, I believe, the pathological breed, as apart from the Æsculapians, who carve into us, saw unhealthy portions of our frames, treat us for organ-troubles and otherwise play butcher's shop with our anatomical furniture. Myself, I have found the three-day starvation cure on a milk diet do all that my ailments have ever required to effect their removal, and an erstwhile countryman of mine, the Carinthian

Doctor Bancke, was, so far as I know, its inventor. The experts surrounding Frederick were, however, the first surgeons in German countries, and I am far from wondering at the jealous irritation they displayed when Doctor Morell Mackenzie appeared on the scene as chief operator on the stricken Crown Prince.

It is not my purpose to go into the question of Mackenzie's fitness for this particular work. To my own way of thinking, he was a transparently honest Englishman, and what he had to say publicly regarding the intrigues which played around the couch of the Crown Prince Frederick proved a sufficient answer to his adverse critics. I regard rather the political point of view, and although the suggestion was only faintly heard at the time that the Prince's death was hoped for by a prominent camarilla of militarists in Berlin, there is no reason now for disguising the fact that this was really so. Accordingly, it is not surprising to hear that it was at the insistence of his English Consort, the Crown Princess Victoria, who might be expected to understand the conditions of the entire case, and who acted in co-operation with the Prince of Wales, that the great London surgeon was summoned—perhaps too late—to attend on Frederick.

It requires no vast imagination to foresee what truthful history will have to say anent this episode; it must in any case consider it, not only in respect of the master spirit of a conspiracy which was willing to go to the extreme of crime in order to

achieve its ends, but more particularly in view of the crimes of Meyerling and Serajevo, which must suggest themselves as corollaries to the nefast intrigues surrounding the last days of the second Emperor of the German Confederation. And where has history failed to state the ineluctable law of compensation? In which case has it not demonstrated that power bought by crime can be maintained only by crime? That even a militarism like that of Napoleon, led by the most spectacular military genius of the world, could not survive in a reasoning age, nor live except in the dreams of minds diseased? Yea, History itself is the first best argument for the existence of God, as well as for the principle of retributive Justice in the world.

Among the many notabilities at San Remo, in the winter of 1887-1888 was an eminent Grand Duke of the Romanoffs, who has since passed away. At this time, I may say, Prince Bismarck was working all the forces he could assemble, with the object of maintaining the very specious friendship which Prussia was professing towards the Muscovites. In a previous decade he had been successful in detaching Russia from anything in the nature of an *entente* with France, a traditional idea in Franco-Russian policies dating from the Second Catherine's day. Memories of the Crimea had not entirely died out in Russia. France still remembered 1870; Bismarck had played on every possible antipathy nourished by the two Powers, and about this time he was in a

position to congratulate himself on a successful achievement in point. Although chronologically I am out of place, I wish here to state that the advice, in regard to Russia, said to have been given to his son and grandson, the Crown Prince Frederick and Prince William of Prussia, by the old Emperor William on his death-bed in March 1888—namely, to do all in their power to preserve the good will and friendship of the Tsar Alexander—this, I may say, was a pure invention of the Prussian Chancellor, and was given by Bismarck, through his henchman Abenken, to the Press, as having been the spontaneous counsel of the dying monarch. Here, indeed, was a very characteristic piece of Bismarckian press-agency work, the echoes of which he meant to work their effects on all the Powers which are to-day at war. Proof of this bit of strategy on the part of the Chancellor was given us in Vienna by the chief of the well-known Taafe tribe. This Austro-Irishman, as he was fond of calling himself, was then Prime Minister to Kaiser Franz, and possessed excellent sources of information.

As it may be supposed, the Bismarckian idea was far from commending itself either to my master or to his far-seeing friend, the English Heir-Apparent; for under the conditions of a confederated Germany, anything in the shape of an alliance between Russia and the Confederation must have meant a revival of the old Napoleon-Alexander idea of Tilsit days—namely, a division of the Continent, in which Eastern Europe—includ-

ing part of Austria—would have been at the mercy of Russia, and Western Europe at that of Germany. It is testimony to the statesmanlike prevision of both the Archduke and the Prince of Wales that more than a quarter of a century before the War of 1914, both of them had clearly foreseen that Prussian ambitions already contemplated a temporary division of Continental Europe, after which one final war would be waged between the twin masters for the possession of Constantinople and the maritime supremacy held by England.

Personally, I have been privileged to listen to conversations held by my master and the English Prince, in which was discussed the programme as mapped out in a work much read in recent years—namely, the forecast by Baron Bernhardi as to Germany's conquistadorial ambitions; and when in these days I reflect on those discussions, I realise that the two heirs had forecogitated Prussia's plans almost to the last intention. This fact itself explains why the English Prince, on acceding to the Throne, lost no time in preparing France and persuading Russia, in the course of those memorable visits which practically aligned in battle order the forces of Liberty against those of Feudalism, and it is for this reason I hold that history will place that English King among the greatest of Britons. But, alas, by the time of Edward's accession, Rudolph had many years been buried with a hundred Habsburg forbears under the old Capuchin Church of Vienna, and a withering change had come upon the spirit of my country's vision.

With the Grand Duke from
haughtiest and least affable o
who was then visiting San Remo
under some constraint as far as m
concerned; for, as I have previou
Rudolph was the veriest of Kelts in his
to disguise feelings of antipathy, and the
was well known to him to be in sympathy
Bismarck's Russophile notions and schemes.
characteristic of the Archduke was, in the opini
of men who knew him better than I could have
known him, due not so much to any ideas that his exalted rank excused him, for he was the bravest of men and permitted neither himself nor others to show an unworthy arrogance to those placed in a position inferior to his own, or to that of his companions; and so it was that he was most popular with the humblest of those who served him.

Intellectually he was a man of great independence, and was capable, as the Prince of Wales once told him, in my hearing, of contradicting even Mr Gladstone, had he considered that eminent student and statesman to be in the wrong. It was in him, for example, to appear in the funeral cortège of the old Emperor William in the uniform of the Bohemian Regiment of which he was Colonel, although etiquette dictated that he should have appeared in that of a Colonel of the Prussian Army. Those who remember the German Gutter Press of those days will have no difficulty in recalling a series of attacks which were made on the Archduke as a result of his visit

re, it was said by, among others, *Nachrichten*, his rôle was merely ...ybody."

...s related of a public quarrel in which ...lged with the Russian Grand Duke of ...ave spoken—a scene which had arisen as ... of a discussion of the then existing position ...stria-Hungary among the Powers, one of those ...gerous topics which even the most diplomatic of ...en will touch upon in their deeper cups. I have said elsewhere that, in my experience, there is a generous amount of human nature in princesses; princes are not found to form any exception, and if the Archduke was on this occasion accused by German papers of having paid too heavy a tribute to Bacchus, it was not so much that the charge was true, as that the scene was particularly outrageous, suggesting the drinking hall rather than the banquet hall. It may be remembered that Prince William of Prussia had not long before been guilty of a similar lapse from diplomatic decorum, which had been severely commented upon by Austrian, English and French papers. Inspiration was certainly not lacking to the scribes of the Wilhelmstrasze and Charlottenburg.

As I have before stated, the people, from mere hearsay, founded on no reliable facts, imbibe some strange notions of the foibles of their princes and their leading men. It was commonly thought in Vienna that the Archduke Rudolph was not only a confirmed drinker but that he was also a victim of the drug vice. As to these charges, I

am in the fortunate position of being able, from my own opportunities for observation, to oppose a complete denial. As an athlete and gymnast, there were few amateurs alive who were superior to him, and in the opinion of the late Sir Charles Dilke, himself an eminent fencing expert, the Archduke was one of the first foilsmen in Europe. As a big-game shot he also excelled, and in regard to attentiveness to his public duties no prince or sovereign in Europe was more punctilious. He was, moreover, a deep student of economic questions, and those connected with Labour were especially attractive to him; his bent in the higher literatures was towards history and metaphysical speculation, while all men of note in Europe who had met him were unanimous in praising the soundness of his judgment, both in political and in literary matters.

As I have also said, he had, like all the Habsburgs, learned a trade, and his choice had been that of practical printer. Probably the greatest passion among his studies was the somewhat unusual science of ornithology, and his advice on details connected with this branch of knowledge had been asked on more than one occasion by directors of museums, both at home and abroad. Add to this the fact that he contributed essays to several publications on subjects in which he was interested.[1]

[1] One of the last letters he wrote in life was a note to Weilen, the journalist, promising to give him an essay as well as to finish his *Story of Gödollö*. This was on the day before his death.—DIARIST.

In my view, he was among the best horsemen I have met, as his Imperial mother was certainly the first horsewoman in the world. All these details I put before the reader in order to indicate that a man of such a type could not have been the hardened devotee of the bottle that rumour so often accused him of being. With his youth, his position, his temptations all considered, it would have been strange, indeed, had he lived the life of an ascetic—a life from which he was as far removed as he was incapable of its extreme.

I enjoyed, many a time, the privilege of conversation with my master on subjects which, I presume, interest most men of extended and intelligent reading. Psychology, in particular, was a science in which he was interested more than others, and the subjects of suicide, drink, dreams and education were frequently discussed in his hours of leisure. As I have just touched upon the charge that he was a confirmed devotee of the bottle, I will here give a short digest of an article that he once wrote for Weilen on the subject of alcoholic indulgence, which, in my opinion, states the case against the abuse of alcohol with considerable ability; and which, at all events, attracted attention at the time, since some of his remarks forestall the so-called electron theory which later came into currency:

"As it has been observed, man may well be described as machine, plus a mind. Physically he may be said to be an electrical organism con-

structed in every essential particular of electrons, the activity of which gives him his energy and constitutes his forcefulness in the struggle for life. In other words, the greater his personal or physical 'dynamo,' and the sounder his electrical composition, the greater his supply of energy, and the better is he equipped in order to fight the battle of life and triumph over those who do not possess as strong an electrical supply as his. This vibratory force it is, consequently, that makes him a forceful and energetic character, if the supply is large and properly controlled, or a weakling, should the supply be small or intermittent and not wisely controlled according to what physical scientists call the principle of conservation of energy. This principle is a known law of Nature, and in man it is expressed by the will-power, or the governing check, bestowed by Nature, which exercises its function by virtue of the reasoning force, the main quality of which is a sense of economy. Your value in the scheme of the world and your likelihood of attaining success, therefore, depend on your supply of energy and on your sense of economising it, directing it properly and allowing as little as possible of it to go to waste.

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"In his normal physical working condition, man may be described as a kind of natural machine the workableness of which depends on the wholesomeness of food and drink taken in proportion to the need for sustained effort or application. What food he eats goes to strengthen

the tissue-supply and enrich the blood. The firmer the tissues and the richer the blood, the greater the physical and mental capacity for the production of effort and sustained concentration of thought. Before the invention of alcoholic liquors, man, when he found himself in that particular condition of body and mind which we term 'run down'—like a clock, for instance—recuperated by resting from his labours until he was wound up anew and ready to continue the struggle. He rested till waste tissue was removed from his frame and a new supply formed, and if he was a man who worked with his brain, till the brain cells were recreated and a fresh supply of new-made blood was sent travelling through the thousands of little veins that irrigated (so to speak) and refertilised the area of the brain or mental apparatus—the cerebrum, the anatomists call it.

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"With the invention of alcohol, there came, however, a new condition of affairs. Men found that when the body and the mind were run down or fatigued, it was possible artificially to recreate their energies, and that, too, almost at once, by drinking spirituous liquors. A new impulse was created by the draught of alcohol—which impulse lasted for a certain time, during which the energies seemed to be accelerated, and even thought seemed to be promoted. The new-found energies did not endure long, however. When they were expended, an unusual lassitude was experienced,

both in the body and the mind, and in order to stimulate them anew, recourse was again made to the bottle. Each period of exhilaration was succeeded by a period of lassitude proportionate to the artificial recreation of energy, and finally intoxication (*i.e.* poisoning) of both the physical and mental apparatus forbade further call on the supply of electrical energy. In other words, our drinking man found himself in the position of having, metaphorically speaking, overdrawn his physical and mental account to a point at which the bank refused to lend any more. This is the simple result of wantonly abusing alcohol, for its proper use is sanctioned, in special cases, by the highest medical experts. Not only has the drunkard overdrawn on the electrical supply of his physical make-up, but he has also overdrawn on his mental 'balance,' and in the end finds himself a physical and mental bankrupt.

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"The old view that the brain contained the total supply of will-power has more recently been superseded by the view that this will-power—a species of thought-directed energy, as we have seen—is diffused over the whole system, from which it radiates in proportion to its elemental force. The consequence, therefore, of over-indulgence in alcohol must be as bad for the physical frame, in its effects, as it is for the cerebral or brain equipment, physicists, indeed, making no specific distinction when talking of the somatic or bodily frame as a whole, apart from the

soul so-called. There is no doubt, however, that its first and most serious attack is upon the most refined portions of the human organism—a man's brain gives way to the effects of alcohol long before his limbs, other things being normal. His memory is the first to show the effects, this being due to the fact that the power of co-ordinating, or associating ideas in a logical order, is destroyed by the successive assaults of the spirituous poison on the most refined proportion of the sensorium in which are stored the impressions received through the eye. Notice the drunkard's eye: it is the most tell-tale of all his organs; test his memory, and you will see to what extent it is in the condition of being what is commonly called "fuddled." Without memory and with a defective or atrophied power for receiving impressions, his two most important functions are for most purposes useless, namely, his reason and—particularly in the case of ambitious men—his imagination, or power of origination.

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"Whatever mythical stories may be told of the 'inspirations' great geniuses may have derived from the use of alcohol, it is certain that no great genius, whether of ancient or modern times, was an abuser of alcohol, and equally certain that no drunkard—in the sense of a habitual abuser of alcohol—has ever produced imperishable or even long-lasting work. Goethe, Balzac, Voltaire, Byron, Shakespeare, were users, in a degree, of alcohol, but by no manner of means

were they addicted to its undue use. Napoleon and Cæsar were moderate users of vinous drinks, and the great scientists and thinkers have also used them in moderation. The bestowal by Nature of those great faculties which go to make up what we call genius, obviously, if they are meant to exert real dynamic energies, must also include a strong power of reasoning and self-criticism, which latter, in this case, amounts to the principle of conservation of energy. The most striking faculty of genius, moreover, or indeed of great ability, is that of working by the simplest and directest methods, or those in which the greatest results are produced by the least waste of positive energy.

"The first best remedy against the abuse of alcohol is, therefore, the cultivation of the reasoning power and the exercise of that faculty of self-criticism which teaches one the folly of expending natural gifts, or forces, in reckless and undirected fashion so as to bring about the inevitable bankruptcy of body and mind by over-drawing on the natural supply."

Our sojourn at San Remo was not a lengthy one, as I well remember by the fact that, during our stay there, only two couriers arrived bearing mails from Vienna, among the many letters for our party being one from my old schoolfellow Koinoff, containing a request for a more considerable loan than I had yet made him, the cards and the race-horses having once more declared

in his disfavour. The letter contained other matter which I shall deal with in its proper place, and which proved more interesting in the sequel than I could possibly have foreseen at the time of its receipt. Another letter, which was addressed to the Archduke, came under my observation before that of my patron, since it was part of my duty to open, and, if very lengthy, to précis, all communications which did not bear the Archducal token of privacy, a token that made them sacrosanct to all but himself. Like other persons of note who employ many secretaries, His Highness had an especial cachet of paper which was supplied, under instructions to his chamberlain, to particular friends whom he permitted to correspond with himself, and all letters of this cachet passed immediately to his own notice.

The especial communication which so vividly recalls itself to my mind was one of several which had come directly under my attention since I had served my master as personal secretary; and if I mention it now, it is by no means to offend any person's susceptibilities, but merely to show how interesting a prince's correspondence can be and how potent an appeal his royal condition can make to the patriotic instincts of the humblest of his subjects, actual or potential. Those who are intimately acquainted with the life of one of the greatest of Britons, Lord Byron, will remember well how the poet was once the recipient of a letter from a young and untried

maiden who solicited from his lordship the honour of conferring upon her the most intimate kind of personal patronage which man can at any time confer upon woman. The fair aspirant, it will be remembered, went fully into details; explaining how she had reached a certain age and as yet was entitled to wear the white robe, the fillets and the lily-like wand which were peculiar to the handmaidens of the Temple of Vesta; how she had up till then seen many a variety of male, but how she could conceive of the poet-peer alone as the sole possible patron who came up to the specifications of her heart's ideal; how, Dudu-like, she used to dream of apples and other fruits of paradise—and so on.

Byron, we are told, was more interested in this letter than any he had ever received from the large number of *inamorate* who, at one time or other in his life, had become dear to him, and, accordingly, proved kind to his fair correspondent. The particular letter which I recall was written by a maiden of the upper class, who (she said) was about to be forced into a marriage for which she had no inclination, and was in other respects conceived in terms similar to those which made up the epistle indited to the English poet. The Archduke, in those days at least, was in no humour, however, to indulge his *droit de jambe*, as the French call it.

CHAPTER XIII

Return to Laxenburg Castle—Kaiser Franz's Unexpected Visit to his Son—The Rudolph-Vetsera *Liaison*—Rudolph's Loyalty to his Sire—Promise to give up Marie Vetsera—Rudolph and his Mother—Alleged Appeal by the Archduke for Divorce—Prussia's Conquest-Manias—My Turf Successes—Koinoff visits me again—His Gaming Transactions—Count Potocki's Visit—Koinoff's Story of a Mysterious Letter—Bismarck will do no Murder—*Ich bin kein sicarius*—Who is implicated in Berlin's Murderous Intrigues—Question of the Vatican—The Secular Arm—A New Man and New Measures in Berlin—The most Pathetic Kind of Mediocrity

On our return from Rome, whither from San Remo the Archduke had proceeded incognito, accompanied by Count Potocki and myself, we went into residence at Laxenburg. On the morning following our arrival at the Castle, shortly after the Archduke had ordered his carriage, with the intention of paying his respects to Kaiser Franz at the Hofburg, the very unexpected announcement was made of the arrival of the Emperor and his Consort, somewhat to the irritation, I observed, of His Highness, with whom I was then engaged in dealing with a large accumulation of correspondence. The Archducal entourage had been, from the very beginning of the *liaison* with Marie Vetsera, under no illusions whatever as to what its result must be—namely, intervention on the part of the Emperor, who, in this matter, was moved rather by the temptations it

offered to the political enemies of his throne rather than by any moral considerations involved in the illicit connection, or, I must say it, even by any regard for the feelings of such as might be hurt by its continuance. At this stage, I have no hesitation in expressing my conviction that Kaiser Franz had already divined the sinister nature of the intrigues which were then brewing in Berlin in the camarilla of militarists who had become obsessed by Mommsen's extravagant historical implications, which went the length of prophesying that the time was close at hand when the thrice-victorious Prussia of 1864, 1866 and 1870 was at last to enter into that inheritance of ancient Roman dominion upon which neither Charlemagne nor the Habsburgs had been successful in permanently imposing their dynastic headship.

And if you think it extravagant that intellectual Berlin could seriously accept such prophecies, just consider the case of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, of our own day, whose teaching—namely, that Jesus Christ was, through the Amorites, of aboriginal Teutonic descent—receives the applause of academic Germany from the Emperor William himself down to the meanest Privat-Dozent, or private tutor, in the Fatherland. And Chamberlain bases his conclusion to some extent on the possible correctness of the very vague hypothesis that the Amorites were really "Men of the North," but mainly on his own identification of Christ's "method of thought" with that of a modern

German professor! So that in one generation the insensibility of Mommsen to the absurdity of false analogies has graduated into the lunacies of the Arch-Teutonophile, and each teacher in his turn provides, in a degree, the measure of modern Germany's intellectual worth.

In the Archduke's immediate entourage we had often discussed the probability of the Emperor's intervention, and since an unusual series of communications had passed directly between Kaiser Franz and his Heir-Apparent during our absence in San Remo and Rome, neither Potocki nor myself was under any illusion that the bolt was about to fall. We were not long in suspense, however, for on the evening of his Imperial parents' visit to Laxenburg, the Archduke informed us that it was his intention to pay a lengthy scientific visit to South America —in the company of his Consort. He was, I remember, in gay good humour on that occasion; intended, he said, to take us all with him as well as a host of scientific experts in imitation, as he told us, of Napoleon when that commander invaded Egypt, and that in all probability we might prepare for the adventure about the end of December of that year—which, I may say, was about one month before my master passed away at Meyerling. The Emperor Francis had not miscalculated on the loyalty of his Heir, whose devotion to his sire was one of the most beautiful traits I have witnessed in any man. That the Empress Elizabeth counted for much in the

Archduke's decision to break with Mademoiselle, I refuse to believe, for although he was devoted to his Imperial mother, his regard for the Empress was slightly coloured with that fatherly indulgence which Kaiser Franz displayed towards his Consort.

Such indulgence was entirely German, or, if you will, somewhat Sultanic, and woman as an intellectual entity counted for very, very little in the eyes of the Habsburg Princes. I have said elsewhere that as the traveller—the intelligent traveller—goes east of Berlin, he becomes conscious of something barbaric in the atmosphere of man and town. You sense this atmosphere, for all its ostentatious and somewhat vulgar modernity, in Berlin, though you are hardly conscious of it in Magdeburg or Cologne; and as you go south towards the Danube, you realise that you are among the racial descendants of those philosophers who were wont to discuss whether, or not, woman possessed a soul. In these regions, and as you travel farther south, she is a toy, and has only an ornamental or domestic place in the scheme of important things. Peter the Great, you may remember, used, when he was sober enough to hold a Drawing Room, to make the fairest débutantes at the foot of his throne turn round, filly-wise, and show their ankles. And likewise, I often noted, it was much as cattle experts that the august hemicycle of Imperial Princes was wont to consider the maids of more human clay as they peacocked past the chiefs of Habsburg in the Palaces of Vienna.

Notwithstanding the loyalty of the heads of the Vetsera family, which was entirely in favour of the separation of its daughter and the Archduke, a time of trouble and unhappiness set in for my master, who was too accomplished a man of the world not to realise "*furens quid femina possit,*" as the Roman puts it—how far a woman can go in her anger. There was, moreover, a pride of kingly caste in him—peculiar to princes of royal and imperial houses, indeed—which must have forbidden him an alliance with a family of less than royal blood, if, as it was said, he had really, during our visit to Rome, sought the intervention of Leo XIII. and Cardinal Rampolla in order to procure a divorce from his Cōnsort on the ground of cousinship. Whether or not this appeal had really been made by the Archduke, I am wholly unable to say; nor have I ever heard that any one of his intimates had been made a confidant in respect of this widely rumoured report. To my mind, his pride of caste gave the lie to the possibility of such an appeal having been made, and in any case, my master was too well versed in the Canonical custom of the Catholic Church not to know that he was totally without grounds for a divorce.

As for Mademoiselle Vetsera, if the Archduke could say that princes never possessed the satisfaction of confidence as to the regard entertained for them by their dearest mistresses, it shall certainly not be left for myself to say that Marie Vetsera was moved more by vanity and ambition than by

love in her attachment to her Imperial protector. Positive I am, however, that the divorce of these two illicit lovers was not accomplished at once; that the rupture seemed to give no less pain to the Archduke than it gave to his mistress; that they continued to meet at various trysting-places both in and out of Vienna; and that the Emperor found himself obliged, more than once, to intervene and appeal anew to the loyalty of his Heir. Urgency, indeed, entered so largely into the calculations of Kaiser Franz that the projected expedition to South America, which had been planned for the opening of 1889, was actually preferred to a date in the summer of 1888, when, for all the scientific purposes of the adventure, little could have resulted. Would that the expedition had, in any case, taken place! The story of Europe within the past generation might have had to be told in far different terms; and here I am reminded of the famous *mot* of the Emperor Napoleon—namely, that Destiny often moves on the most trivial of contingencies.

During the year 1888, I may say, Fortune had very much favoured myself in regard to any Turf speculations into which I had entered, and I was one of the lucky number which was happy enough to start with the famous run of luck which gave the Duke of Portland two successive Derby winners in Ayrshire and Donovan. My master's luck had, on the contrary, been continuously bad since the autumn of 1887, and this notwithstanding the fact that a fund of excellent information,

both from England and France, had won for many of his friends, men as well as women, respectable fortunes. But as I have related, he was a man whose obstinacy went into every phase of his activities. Among others who had not been favoured by the fickle goddess was the ex-Feldkirchian Koinoff, who was not long in asking for an appointment with myself, when he knew of the Archduke's return. As before, we met at my flat near the Hofgarten, and my old schoolfellow was full of information which had been conveyed, during our several periods of absence, either to Bombelles or Hoyos. I was glad, however, to hear what he had to say at first hand.

"Your letter," he said, referring to my reply to his communication at San Remo, "was doubly welcome. I spent a fortnight of my furlough in Berlin. That Scotchman Duglas got on my track, and, would you believe it, won his last year's losings back, with ten per cent. interest. Nor had I an opportunity of getting my *revanche*, as he was suddenly called to Friederichsruhe to see the chief. The Chancellor has snatched a few days there despite these critical days."

"But why doubly welcome, as you say of my letter?" I asked.

"Well, on my return to Vienna I was badly cleaned out at the Baroness's. Not a maravedi's worth of money left," he answered.

"And who did the cleaning out? They appear to have made a dead-set against you all round," I observed.

"Waldersee it was who broke my bank—young Waldersee, who succeeded Duglas, you remember; one of the cleverest hands in Berlin. And the result is," he added, somewhat abjectly, "the secretary at the Nunciature owns me bodily, if my soul is still my own."

"Why not explain the case to Hoyos or Bombelles," I suggested; "and, above all, why remain at the Nunciature? *Que diable allez-vous faire dans cette galère?* Neither the Nunciature nor Berlin has any more secrets from us. Now you know."

Koinoff rose with affected ease from his chair.

"What do you mean by secrets?" he asked, with a curious fixity. "Secrets about whom—about what?"

"All the judges are not in Berlin," was my reply. "There are also judges in Vienna. Do you think we are under any illusion as to the character of the men who surround Prince William in Berlin; or under any misconceptions as to himself? Are you under any illusions as to them yourself?"

At this moment Bratfisch announced Count Potocki. In expectation of Koinoff's visit, I had asked him to call. There was no need of introductions, and Potocki knew as well as I did that the Feldkirchian was in the pay of Hoyos—in those days of Bismarckian espionage and intrigue an excusable trade on the Continent.

"You ask me if I am under any illusions as to the men around Prince William. Do you

include the Bismarcks among them?" Koinoff proceeded.

"I know what you are going to suggest," I replied; "but there is hardly any necessity. Everybody who knows anything is well aware that the Bismarck *régime* is doomed—as doomed as the Emperor Frederick.[1] Watch the French and our own stock markets; they tell the tale, I think."

"And," interjected Potocki, "there is little doubt that the new Crown Prince has shown his hand so plainly that Bismarck is under no illusions as to William's intention to reign alone when his turn comes."

"Still they were on sufficiently good terms up to a year ago. Why these sudden hates, I wonder?" was my remark.

"The truth is," replied Potocki, "William is already in the saddle, and he knows it; so does the Chancellor. They have fallen out on the Colonial question, which Bismarck has sworn to oppose with all his might. He wants no colonies, but Wilhelm does; the Army is sufficient for Bismarck, but William wants a navy to play with. The Chancellor thinks that Prussia ought to be satisfied with carrying out the policies of Frederick the Great and annex Europe on the instalment plan; but William—William is less modest; he wants——"

"—the Earth," as an American would say;

[1] The Emperor Frederick had indeed passed less than six weeks after this conversation.—DIARIST.

Koinoff interrupted. "You are right, Count! And yet," added the Feldkirchian thoughtfully, "you are only partly right. Bismarck quarrelled with William on an entirely different score. Shall I tell you?"

"Speak by all means," we answered in a single voice.

"Well, gentlemen," replied the ex-scholastic, "I am afraid of walls—can they hear?"

"*Aures habent, sed non audient*, as the Psalmist says," I answered rather feebly; "go on with your mystery, Koinoff."

"When I was in Berlin doing précis work for Dr Petri," the Feldkirchian resumed, "I was, as you will remember, housed—for office-room, at least—with the Doctor's department—that is to say, an annexe of the Chancellor's. As the only one who knew Italian perfectly, and could translate without hesitation, into Italian, letters dictated to me, in German, by Petri, I came into more frequent intimacy with the Doctor than the others, most of whom were Lutherans. The bulk of the correspondence which passed between Berlin and the Vatican dealt, as you may suppose, with the settlement following on the close of the *Kulturkampf*—work with which Petri, as an ex-priest, was highly competent to deal as to canonical, theological or disciplinary details. As it frequently happened that correspondence was heavy, my particular work obliged me on occasion to keep late hours in my office, which adjoined that of Dr Petri. Here one evening, as he was

hurriedly departing, the Doctor handed me a sheaf of notes written by himself which I was to amplify and translate into Italian—notes on matters of mere technical interest which contained no mystery. Lurking among the leaves, however, lay a letter which was certainly not intended for anyone's perusal but that of my immediate chief. It was in Italian and written in a peculiarly small hand, unsigned, undated and without any evidence of the place of its origin. The beauty of the handwriting at first attracted my attention, then the contents, which were full of mystery. The letter, as I could read between the lines, referred to a previous communication in which nothing was said, but much conveyed.

"It concerned the existence of a man of the first importance who, the context allowed an intelligent person to assume, constituted an obstruction in the path of those whom the writer represented, as well as a thorn in the path of other important persons who, of course, remained unnamed. There was sufficient in the contents of this mysterious note to justify me in thinking that I was in presence of a matter of moment. It spoke of certain friends who were prepared to act; it mentioned the Castle of Laxenburg; there was question of the necessary female influence; it deplored the lack of energy or courage on the part of an agent of great importance. The letter was of sufficient importance, I realised, that to be known to know of its contents would have been, I calculated, adverse to my health—to say the least. I

decided to replace it in the Doctor's office, and moved to the adjoining room—in darkness, since its occupant had gone. As I entered with that intention, a high-pitched voice struck upon my ear, angry in tone, or at least querulous. It came from an open window which ran at right angles to the Doctor's office. Its blinds were drawn, but the windows of both pieces were open. The high-pitched voice was that of Bismarck :

" 'No,' the Chancellor was saying; 'I will slay in fair fight when the lists are open and all may be called fair. But I will do no killing by stealth, nor will I be the agent of those who murder in the dark. *Ich bin kein sicarius.*' [1] The words came firmly and loudly.

" The second voice was not heard for some time, and when it spoke, I failed to distinguish the words, but was only conscious of low guttural tones suggesting a feeling of contempt. The shadow of the tall Chancellor was then thrown on the blind, as if rising from a chair, and I deposited the mysterious letter on the floor under the Doctor's secretaire. Returning swiftly to my office, I picked up the completed budget ready for my chief's perusal, transferred it to an open dispatch-case of which he alone held the key, pressed the clasp-lock and was soon outside the building."

" Of course," said Potocki, " you waited to see who the Chancellor's visitor was ? "

[1] The Latin word *sica* means dagger. A professional murderer was known to the Romans as a *sicarius*.—EDITOR.

"No, Count; I did not wait," Koinoff replied simply. "Besides," he added, as of an afterthought, "I knew who was accustomed to visit him about that hour."

"But, Koinoff," said I, somewhat puzzled, "to what does all this lead? Where is the implication?"

And the Feldkirchian replied: "When I came to the Nunciature, I discovered the wonderful handwriting again—not once but several times. It came from Rome."

"Oh, surely not, Mr Koinoff. Think again," exclaimed Potocki rather doubtfully. "You do not, I presume, insinuate that the Vatican would descend to murder?"

"Count," replied Koinoff, with a touch of sententiousness, "there are wheels within wheels. Do you know Galimberti? *Aspice formicam*—consider *that* ant of industry! Do you think Galimberti is overburdened with scruples?"

"That," retorted Potocki, also with some sententiousness, "is a question with an assumption."

"Meaning to say——?" asked my old schoolfellow, smiling.

"I mean to say," the Count answered, "that you evidently assume me to think that because a man is a Nuncio he is necessarily above suspicion. Believe me, I do not."

"Well," said the Feldkirchian, with decision, "you have read history. So have I. And I fear I can only reply again that there are wheels within wheels. Besides, Count Potocki," he



PRINCE BISMARCK IN RETIREMENT, 1890.
AFTER THE PAINTING BY LENBACH.

added, after a pause, "I have been at the Nunciature now for several months—nearly a year. I have perhaps observed where I was not supposed to have observed. That you will overlook, however, for I owe my first allegiance to Austria."

"Quite right, Mr Koinoff," Potocki assented kindly. "Your heart is in the right place."

I was pleased with my old schoolfellow, although still a bit mystified. "Koinoff," I asked, "what is the conclusion you arrive at? Is Bismarck, or the Bismarcks, if you prefer it, in the game or out of it?"

"Speaking for myself," he replied, "I should say that, positively, Bismarck is out of it, since his hand refuses to work in the matter. Negatively, however, he may be in it—that is to say, he may approve results which suit his particular strategy. As for Herbert Bismarck—he may be a man-hater, but he is no murderer."

"And as you must have divined much from the correspondence of the mind of the Roman 'Blacks'—where do you think they stand?" I asked.

"My dear Youngster," he replied, falling back on an old Feldkirchian term by which the juniors were known to the senior pupils, "there is, in dark matters, always a point at which the Church retires in favour of—the secular arm."

"And," asked Potocki, "in this particular case, where do you find the secular arm?"

"In Berlin, Count; in Berlin," Koinoff replied.

"In another month, or perhaps even less, there will be a new occupant of the throne; there will be new men and new measures. I have just returned from Berlin, and I tell you that there are to-day thousands of mean little spirits listening for the crash that will bring to earth the only genuine Colossus that Prussia has produced in her short and shabby history—the Imperial Chancellor, Bismarck. Bismarck's reign is drawing to a close, and he will pass as others have passed. With his passing will succeed the feeblest and most impermanent of all forms of government—that which rules by virtue of the sword. And mediocrity will sit and reign where real greatness stood and served—the most pathetic of all mediocrities—namely, that which expects a minimum of capability to achieve a maximum of performance."

CHAPTER XIV

Berlin in July 1888—A City of Martial Law—Return of Wolfram to Vienna—What Kinsky's Cousin had to relate—His Friend the Bocher—Berlin's Money-lenders and their Satellites—Evidence of Inside Information—Forging the Archduke's Handwriting—A Forged Letter from Rudolph—On the Trail of the Enemy—Intentions of Militarists in Berlin—Ineptitude of Berlin's Agents—Sharps *versus* Flats—Clerics and Conspirators—Prince Henry's New-found Importance—Bismarck and *Imponderabilia*—The Great Imponderable—Natural End of Pork-eaters—Politico-Spiritual Rôle of the Vatican—Austria and the Omens

By July of 1888, Wilhelm II. was reigning in Berlin, and though I was not myself a spectator of the obsequies of the Emperor Frederick, I learned from members of the Archduke's suite that a change had already come upon the Prussian capital as marvellous as it was sudden. Berlin had always been, in my experience of it, the world's chief exemplar of the city which is military first, official next and civic last of all; the very street-sweeper appeared to be conscious of possessing the sacred investment of an authority which distinguished him from the plain citizen; the policeman looked and acted the part of a quasi-military being who dispensed summary permission to ordinary men to walk the highways; even private members of the upper classes seemed grateful for the privilege of being allowed to tread the side walks unscrutinised and unsuspected

of the sentinels of order; while minor social fry, as they passed along with stiff business-like stride, gave foreigners the air of men who inwardly rejoiced in the consciousness of being "certified correct." And as for the representatives of *the* Caste, from the rigid, broad-beamed field officer to the chattering, gesticulative yet mightily self-centred subaltern—all these trod the favoured soil with the processional gait of gods who had condescended to a momentary incarnation on a very humble planet. I was not in Berlin in June when the second Emperor of the Germans passed to the elect, but my imagination is equal to conjuring up the quality of the apotheosis which military Berlin took on with the advent of its new Imperial lord of war.

To some intimate and important degree, apart from high politics, we in Vienna were affected by the change. The youthful Wolfram, of whom I have spoken in a previous chapter, had taken counsel from his Swedish mistress, a few weeks before the death of Frederick, and had consented to abandon his loved city by the Spree and come to Vienna. With him came the blonde and buxom opera-singer Stromberg, and both of them brought tidings which substantiated in a close way all that Koinoff had told Count Potocki and myself at my flat, as I have also related in its proper place. The infatuated couple were seemingly more infatuated than before, and she and Wolfram had gone into splendid apartments in the Ringstrasze. It was here, during my

master's absence from town, that I met the interesting twain. The description of a woman is not my forte, and, in any case, those who knew Paris in the early nineties—shortly after the marriage of Wolfram to a lady of his own tribe—will well remember the spectacular enough Swede who was known among the Parisian *gommeux* as the *ci-devant femme du frère d'Allemagne*. Out of sheer devotion to her lover, and in order to further his quest for details, the Swede had consented to return to her only too willing Henry, shortly after I had made him acquainted, in March 1888, at the old Emperor William's death, with the urgency in which we stood of finding out the exact nature of the supposed intrigue against the Heir of the Habsburgs.

"As you will recollect," Wolfram explained at our meeting alone, "your intelligence was not less startling than disquieting, and in view of the nature of the crime planned and its intended victim, I resolved to make all possible sacrifice in order that you should have every available item of information. On your return to Vienna, when I considered the whole matter alone, I frankly admit that my first conclusion as to the chances of being able to help you was one of despair, and though I was prepared to liquidate all I possess, if necessary, in order to get the required information, I realised that I was a very insignificant David indeed, when faced with the Goliath of a group of military conspirators of whom I had hardly even heard. At times, too, I was inclined

to think that your suspicions at Vienna were based upon idle dreams and vicious fantasies rather than upon anything you really knew, or even upon sane deductions. However, on reflection, I resolved to see if money—which works with subtler magic in Berlin than in any other capital I know—could help me. Accordingly, I decided to rely on a Bocher friend of mine who was largely in my debt, hopelessly so, indeed, and the Bocher, being an unnational creature, as you well know——"

"Excuse me, my dear Wolfram," I interrupted, "but is this some new word you are springing on my philological innocency? I am well acquainted with a multiplicity of argot terms —but what the devil is a Bocher?"

"My poor, poor simpleton," replied Wolfram, in a staring kind of pity, "but can you really pretend not to know what is meant by a Bocher —*you*, a more case-hardened vagabond than the classic fancy-man for whom Calypso couldn't console herself? You surprise me!"

I could only shake my head in token of unworthy ignorance.

"Well," explained my young friend, "a Berlin Bocher is a flash Jew, and it is only Berlin that breeds them. Sometimes they are quite wealthy, but the majority of them are fashionable money-lenders' touts, and you know the type of gentry who operate in that particular line of commerce. At all events, my particular Bocher was on the ribbed sea sands, financially speaking,

and fast approaching the rocks. His name was Lazarus, and as I sympathised with the fellow, I lent him money—a considerable sum."

"You resurrected him, in other words. Christ-like man!" I commented.

"Don't be blasphemous, my friend," Wolfram went on; "this is a serious matter. I had kept counsel regarding the whole affair, not explaining even a word to Christiane. With Lazarus, whom I could always summon in respect of any cattle the stable required, I successfully sustained for some time the attitude of one who was simply exchanging the gossip of the day. Not for long, however; for one morning, after we had discussed the matter at somewhat greater length than usual—I am no diplomatist, you know—Lazarus suddenly approached me with that easy familiarity the Jew adopts so readily with people in our condition.

"'Count,' he said, 'you know Berlin pretty well. So do I. Well, then, I needn't tell you that you can buy anything you like in Berlin—including information.'

"'So-ho!' I exclaimed. 'But I am no journalist. I buy horses, Lazarus. I buy carriages and wines, as you know. Yet you talk of information—what the devil should I want with information?'

"The Bocher grinned and actually put his two hands on my shoulders, looking me straight between the eyes.

"'Count,' he said, 'you've been a good friend

to me, and though I'm a white Jew, I'm also a countryman of yours. I'm a Pole. I come out of Cracow—a city which you well know. Besides, you're related to those Kinskys, and the Kinskys have always been good to our people.'

"'My good Lazarus,' I objected, 'all this may be as you say. But why should you suppose that I require any information? Information about what? I am not a politician. I am not even in the diplomatic service. I am only a private person, as you know.'

"'Well, now,' he replied, 'you don't need to be told that money talks. But, believe me, those who want money talk more. I mix every day of my life with men who want money and men who lend it. We hear more than the politicians and the diplomatists put together. We are on the inside track, and if you want an inside proof, I'll give you one.'

"'Indeed!' said I, very much interested. 'It's only out of mere curiosity, Lazarus, you know; but give me an inside proof of something or anything—just for curiosity's sake.'

"'Then, Count,' replied the Bocher, 'you must know that it is the business of money-lenders to keep their eyes open—upon the expert forgers, for example. We do it to protect ourselves, and we know every expert forger in Berlin. We have a hold over most of them. The Government offices employ their services occasionally, and when they do, we are fairly certain to know it—being on the inside track. At the present moment

an expert forger is working for an important man who represents a more important man, who again represents a man much higher up. You don't know the name of the forger, but we do ; and we hold him for a life-sentence any day we care to put the drop on him. Consequently we know what he is forging. Would you like to know, Count ? '

" ' I certainly don't mind being told, Lazarus,' I replied.

" ' At the present moment,' replied my Bocher, ' he is forging the handwriting of the Archduke Rudolph.'

" ' The Archduke Rudolph ! ' I cried. ' But why the Archduke Rudolph ? Where does he come in, and why ? '

" ' Now you asked me, Count,' returned the Bocher rather querulously, ' to give you an inside proof that we are on an inside track. Have I done so—yes or no ? '

" ' You certainly have done so, Lazarus, if what you say is correct,' I replied.

" ' Correct ? ' the Jew exclaimed. ' Do you know the Archduke's handwriting ? '

" ' I should know it if I saw it—certainly,' was my answer.

" ' Then there you are, Count. Try your knowledge on that,' and the Bocher handed me a letter which I examined very carefully.

" ' That, Lazarus, is certainly the Archduke's handwriting,' I admitted, having carefully inspected the document. ' You have made no mistake this time.'

"'No, Count, I have not,' was the reply; 'but you have. That is not the Archduke's handwriting. This letter is a forgery and it was done here for practice in Berlin on paper of his own cachet. Now would you say we are on an inside track or not?'"

At this juncture Wolfram rose, went to a small writing-desk, extracting a document which he passed to myself. It required no great familiarity with it to realise that here, indeed, was the handwriting of the Archduke, my master. Even I myself could not detect that it was a forgery. I was about to question my friend when he interrupted me.

"Let me continue to the end of this story," he said. "The reason why I had laid the Jew under an obligation to myself, by lending him money, was due to something more than sympathy. I had made his acquaintance through his sister, a very amiable Jewess with a rich rendezvous in the official quarter, which was really nothing more nor less than an assignation-house. She was under certain obligations to myself, as her brother also was, and I felt satisfied that I could trust them both, all the more so, you will understand, that they were aware how far I was prepared to be liberal—always a valuable consideration in Berlin, where paymasters are known for their moderation.

"I now realised that your suspicions at Vienna were not without grounds, and I decided to see what was the final object in view, for you must understand, my Bocher had assured me

that among the sharp-witted and well-informed denizens of the world in which he moved it had been for long a matter of private gossip that Kaiser Franz, as well as his Heir, had been marked out for removal, in accordance with the new notions of bringing Austria-Hungary under Prussian domination. I also learned from the same source that a division of opinion was said to exist hereanent, one party urging the removal of the more important obstruction—namely, Rudolph; while the extremists advocated the extinction of both father and son, as being more Roman, and therefore more worthy of the 'Mommsenite' school.

"As you well know, Berlin, although seething with intrigue, is really the worst of all possible schools of the art of intrigue. Men like yourself and myself, who have nothing to do with political plotting or schemes which involve blood-letting, are excusably enough naïve in the pictures we conjure up of deep-working conspiracies, and I suppose it must be the historical romancers and the amateur detectives who have contrived to throw so blinding a glamour over the profound and sable mysteries with which their fancies compel them to wrestle. I have come to the conviction, however, that the cleverest schemers in this world are the men who don't scheme, and that the men of honour are the real sharps; for if I am to judge of intrigue and conspiracy by what goes by these terms in the Prussian capital, then I am forced to the conclusion that the Prussian schemer, high or low, is the veriest

flat that walks the earth—or else that human kind is very confiding, indeed; more particularly his victims.

"Acting on the advice of Lazarus, whose forger friend was prepared to give up every secret he knew—at a price, of course—we soon learned, by putting pursuivants on his trail, that the immediate agent for whom the forger worked was a high-school teacher, the son of one Krause, at whose house lodged Dr Haake, an assistant in the private-service department of the Chancellor, at the head of which is Doctor Petri. Petri, we learned, had in his time been a cleric, and in any case was known to be well in the confidence of the Roman representatives, who are now pretty numerous in Berlin. You will recollect that the forged letter which you have just read dealt with matters respecting religious teaching in the day schools in Prussian Poland, a subject which has been causing the priests much anxiety. Clearly, then, the person for whom it was meant, though his condition or identity is not, comprehensibly enough, indicated, must have been a person who held an important position in Berlin—sufficiently important, in any case, to be able to use his influence in high places."

"That ought to present no difficulty," I remarked. "The Archduke will explain the matter on his return."

"If he can determine the date of the letter—very probably," returned Wolfram. "Well, then," he went on, "using the services of the

Bocher's *aides*, we discovered that Petri, an ex-cleric and probably an anti-cleric, was on frequent visiting terms with members of the various clerical representatives in Berlin—a strange enough situation. A certain cleric of high standing both in Rome and Berlin, and not long ago, here in Vienna, had become a frequent special visitor to the establishment of Prince Henry, and the Hohenzollerns are not pro-clerical, if we except the old Empress Augusta. Not Prince Henry certainly. Now in view of the expected demise of the Emperor Frederick, at that time sorely stricken, Prince Henry had, at the instance of the Crown Prince, begun to play a more important rôle in political circles than formerly. This was very plausibly explained to us on the ground that since Prince William realised the imminence of his own accession, he found it essential to have near him a member of his family who could play the rôle of *bon camarade* with the spirits who up till then had looked upon himself as their leader, so allowing him gradually to efface himself, since what was permissible to Prince William, and even the Crown Prince, would, of course, be unthinkable in a Kaiser enthroned, exposed to the fierce criticism of watchful Europe. To some extent, then, Prince Henry has taken the place of Prince William."

"And the Chancellor—what of him?" I asked.

"As to the Chancellor," replied Wolfram, "it is quite certain that he and the new Kaiser, although apparently on terms of good temper,

outwardly, are, inwardly, sizing each other up for the final tussle—which cannot be far off."

"But do you think him capable of going to the lengths that your own information would suggest —I mean, attempting to destroy Rudolph?"

Wolfram considered a little while in silence.

"Have you," he finally asked, "ever heard of Bismarck's eminently sane doctrine of *imponderabilia*?"

"I must confess," I answered, "that I have not."

"Well," replied Wolfram, "the *imponderabilia* of life are, as you know, the little things and big which one cannot weigh, upon which it is impossible to calculate beforehand, the nasty little slaps of Fate which you cannot foresee, the unforecastable conditions which upset the odds-on chance, the—the—well, my dear fellow, I fear I must travel to America for the word—the almighty 'cussedness' of contingencies that are coming home. As to Bismarck—like yourself, I am under the spell of that wizard—I should say that of all *imponderabilia* he is the Great Imponderable. Yet I think he is too brave a man to slay in the dark—and, again, I do not know what to think. These Prussians are a puzzling proposition; they are not the supermen they think they are; sometimes they are not even men; and yet they are not infra-men. *Expliquera, morbleu, le Prussien qui pourra*—forgive me mishandling—Alfred de Musset, is it? Yet I think the sage who finally expounds and explains the Prussian to the New

Zealander of the Millennium will build his hypothesis, not implausibly, on the fact that a race which devotes its existence largely to the consumption of pork must end by becoming largely —pig."

"Be serious, Wolfram," I reproved; "be serious, and come down to cases. Do you think, as it is said, that the Vatican would like to see our Archduke dead?"

"There, my friend," replied Wolfram, "you enter again into the region of the imponderable—and the permanently imponderable, at that. To weigh the spiritual is hard enough; but to weigh the politico-spiritual—there you have the enigma which drove Constantine to the Bosporus, which clove the policies of Charlemagne, which brought Henry IV. to the knees of Hildebrand, which produced Luther and caused the Thirty Years War, and against which Napoleon himself could not prevail. If the death of an Archduke, or a hundred Archdukes, will serve the political ends of Rome, then Rome will retire into her spiritual fortress and weep that men should be so wicked; but as a spiritual power, she will make it her concern *not* to oppose the passing of the Archduke, that being the privilege attaching to the dual condition of being politico-spiritual."

We were both silent for a moment, and then Wolfram added:

"Between the decadence of our country, with its final passing into the vassalage of the Hohenzollerns, and the survival of its integrity and

prestige, there stand but one measure and one man: the measure is the nationalisation of interests, and the man is Rudolph of Habsburg —God bless him! Does militaristic Germany wish to see such a revival under such a man? What think you? And you know what the education of our masses will mean to the Vatican. These are the omens, so far as I can see."

CHAPTER XV

Wolfram, Christiane and Prince Henry—The Prussian Prince's Threats—Lazarus suggests a "Reconciliation"—Kaiser Wilhelm's Various Poses—His Brother's Equally Simian Characteristics—Henry's Affectation of Sailor-like Simplicity—Christiane returns to her old Lover—What she seeks to discover—Plays on Henry's Vanity—Antipathy of the Imperial Brothers towards Rudolph—The Vatican's Enigmatical Rôle—Monsignore Galimberti's Aspirations—Christiane's Flight to Vienna—Our Precautions to protect Rudolph—His Horror of being "Policed"—Vienna Foreign Office's Ignorance—The Case of Marie Vetsera—Her Regard for Rudolph—Koinoff avoids me—A Successful Double-Event—Rudolph's Debts and Creditors—Where Berlin came in

My young friend Wolfram, in the course of further conversation, related to me, with not a little of the air of a martyr to his higher sense of duty, I thought, how he had forgone the society of his morganatic Swede for the better part of a month. Her *ci-devant* Imperial patron, Prince Henry of Prussia, had found himself unable, I have said, to bear the emptiness of life to which the defection of Christiane, in favour of the young Polish Count, had in a large measure condemned him. Finding, too, that his repeated appeals to the faithless songstress to return to him proved unavailing, he had recourse, like the true Prussian he was, to threats against the person of herself and that of her new lover. It was as the result of an especially menacing communication of this kind from

the disconsolate Imperial sailorman that Christiane consented to meet him once more, but only with a view, as she wrote, under instructions, to making a personal appeal to what was, with considerable humour, described as the "better feelings" of the Hohenzollern.

"My Bocher," Wolfram explained, "had a far deeper sense of intrigue than myself, as you may suppose, and he appeared so preternaturally anxious to probe this particular situation to its most intimate source that I suspected he was working as faithfully for a patron of his own tribe as he was in my own behalf. However, since good results for one side meant good results for the other, I felt that it would be judicious to allow him to pursue his own plans unquestioned. It was at the suggestion of Lazarus, then, that I found myself forced to part with Christiane, who, although the return of her Sailor Prince far from proved a pleasant prospect, was, womanlike, particularly gratified to think that she had been chosen to play an important part in a plot which involved some of the most celebrated people in Europe. The rôle assigned to her by the Bocher was conceived on what Christiane herself already knew of the character and habits of her ex-lover. The Prince was, indeed, even more typically Prussian than his brother, the new Kaiser, in a certain bovine dullness and sluggishness of mind. Hardly less than his brother, however, was he the actor of a specific part.

Everyone in Berlin, and, indeed, most Europeans

who knew him were well aware that the specious eccentricities of William had been thought out, with more or less feeble art: at one hour he was Frederick; at another, Napoleon; in the morning he was Julius; at noon, Tiberius; at night, Aurelius; and even the rôle of the world's only sublime type, Christ, was not sacred from his histrionism. In other words, on the personality of Kaiser Wilhelm II. there was no cachet whatever, which means to say that he was without character. When and where, we may ask in vain, was Napoleon ever anyone but Napoleon; or Cæsar anyone except Cæsar; or Octavian anyone but Octavian; or Cromwell other than Cromwell? These are the characters of granite that send a single impress of themselves moving down the cycles of storied time, ever statuesque, ineffaceable and unconfounded, more permanent than even history itself. How, one may well wonder, will posterity think of Kaiser Wilhelm II., and in which rôle?

"Well," Wolfram continued, "Prince Henry appears to be affected with his own particular mania for playing a part. He is not less simian in disposition than his brother; indeed, the taste for imitation seems to be a characteristic of this entire tribe, as it is also a specific Prussian trait. Somewhere or other, however, Henry has heard it said, or has read that your true sailorman is remarkable for the simplicity of his character, and this is the especial rôle which he affects always and everywhere, as Christiane was able

to convince us by many an incident recalled. Have you ever met a superannuated *ingénue*, or seen her play what she thinks is the part of artless and prattling simplicity? The male counterpart of this curious being is our Prussian Sailor Prince, and if the various rôles enacted by his brother are wretchedly enacted, that of Henry is the limit of infantility. Nevertheless, he shows himself a true Prussian in the inability even to suspect that which is the ridicule of all who know him. Christiane, who is a sufficiently good actress, found no difficulty in persuading him that it was regard for himself, rather than any fear of his threats, which had induced her to consent to see her old lover again. She could, moreover, point to the fact that she had broken off the *liaison* with myself, and, in token thereof, could show that she had taken back her old quarters in the Dorotheenstrasze—a precaution we had carefully provided for.

"Like many women of the northern latitudes, too, Christiane is not only acutely intellectual, but is also possessed of a strong political sense, and was capable of sounding her Imperial patron by the Socratic method of inquiry—a gift which women, I know, rarely possess, but which when possessed by them becomes a highly effective instrument in the eliciting of required information. In the case of anyone less vain, a woman, were she never so clever, would have accomplished nothing; but the weakness which exposed the old Emperor William to the wiles of astute women

like Anna Viereck, the Jewish actress, or Angela Papenberg, was clearly hereditary in the Sailor Prince. That vanity of affected simplicity, acting perhaps in conjunction with his disposition to tell the truth under the malinspirations of Bacchus, was powerless against the inquisitorial method of Christiane, who in a short while was able to inform us of the exact intentions of that party which is now known as the militaristic clique in Berlin, and as to the nature of which the Archduke, from what I gather, is under no illusions. So far, then, we learned little which we had not already divined.

"Evidently, there is not less antipathy in the breast of Prince Henry towards Rudolph than there is in the heart of his brother. From what could be gleaned by Christiane from her old lover, it appeared clear enough that there was a point at which his initiation into the positive plans of the Berlin military party stopped short; and, indeed, my Bocher was probably not wrong in his hypothesis that in view of the nature of the crime which, presumably, is to be attempted with the object of removing either Rudolph or his father, or probably both, the threads of any such conspiracy were as yet not distributed, and that even the secret of a decisive intention to act was as yet locked up in the breast of the one person whom we may suppose to have desired the stage cleared of both Kaiser Franz and his Heir. As a Swede of the popular classes, which in Sweden are strongly Lutheran, Christiane is also a Protestant, and consequently any evidence of an anti-Catholic

disposition on her part would prove neither extraordinary nor suspicious. As it happened, however, although she has no religious bias whatever, this especial basis of inquiry adopted by her with her patron—who, like most men of feeble intellect, is strongly anti-religious—proved of considerable value in putting us in the way of tangible information.

"Prince Henry very openly admitted his knowledge of the fact that the Vatican feared the advent of Rudolph to power on the possible abdication of the Emperor Francis, whose uncle Ferdinand, you know, had abdicated in his own favour in 1848. The Roman 'Blacks' looked upon this possibility with much misgiving and, it was clear from what the Prince allowed her to know, were willing to approve any plan or plot which should prevent such a contingency. It was not for nothing that the Nuncio Galimberti was transferred from Vienna to Berlin, as you well remember. Nor is it without purpose that this prelate has become so pleasing a personage to some of the most important men in the Prussian capital. He has, indeed, been encouraged, Prince Henry admits, to look forward to the support of Kaiser Wilhelm for the red hat, with the ultimate possibility of receiving Imperial suffrages, when, in the course of time, Leo XIII. shall have passed to the elect—a contingency which, you are well aware, is looked forward to as likely at any moment to become fact. So then, in so far as practical results were obtainable, we may assume

that, given the correctness of the hypothesis that the Vatican really counts for something in the whole affair, our quest was not altogether in vain. Lazarus has, in any case, carte blanche from myself to exercise what vigilance he thinks necessary, and in view of the excellent sources of information open to his sister, whose house is the rendezvous of well-known members of the military clique in Berlin, we may reasonably hope to be kept apprised of any new moves which are likely to indicate if anything in the way of definite action is contemplated, and when. As for our own departure from Berlin, I may say that Christiane preceded me here, practically a fugitive from an existence which had become intolerable, and it was really only when she had arrived in Vienna that I was made aware of the fact and decided also to move, leaving my household gods to the charge of the Bocher."

At this time Kalnoky was at the Foreign Ministry in Vienna, and as I had worked in his department as a dispatch-carrier, or Imperial messenger, I acquainted him with what I knew. In view of my previous acquaintance with the working of this particular Ministry, I was not at all surprised to learn from the lips of Kalnoky himself that nothing whatever had been as yet divined of the intrigues which were then being threaded together with the momentous object of inflicting upon Austria a loss from the consequences of which it was doubtful if she

could ever recover. London, as Kinsky had told me, already whispered of dread possibilities; the Foreign Affairs department in Brussels had been acquainted, through Solvyns, with the purport of these whisperings; even Paris newspaper men had distributed hints on several occasions as to the dangers which surrounded the Archduke Rudolph. And yet Vienna's Foreign Office did not know, or affected not to know! As a result of my visit to our Foreign Office, and after the intervention of Bombelles and Hoyos towards the same end, the then chief of police in Vienna, Szoegyeni, certainly redoubled vigilance, and for some time the officiousness of his agents became so apparent, not only in respect of the person of the Archduke, but also in the way of subjecting the Archducal intimates and household officers, including myself, to the attention and scrutiny of his pursuivants, that it seemed certain we might regard both our master and ourselves as reasonably safe, if somewhat uncomfortably so. The object of Szoegyeni in having the officers of the Archduke's household followed was, I afterwards learned, to discover to what extent any member or members of his Highness's might be in touch with the agents of Berlin. If this were so, then our chief police official failed disastrously, as the sequel was to prove. Let it not be for myself, however, to seek to place the blame for that tragic sequel in this quarter; for, alas that I should have to write it! even Viennese officialdom was in those days so intimately

suborned to the evil will of Berlin that it was impossible to say which was the loyal man or woman and which the paid traitor.

One especial circumstance, moreover, was destined fatally to militate against the sharpest and most comprehensive circumspection on the part of those who loved him, and that was the attitude of the Archduke Rudolph himself in the face of any possible danger. I doubt if in certain particulars there existed a much stranger being than my master. There were subjects on which I myself never dared to touch, even when he honoured me with the most intimate approach to his own mind, and I do not think others were more favoured than myself in this regard. That his Imperial sire warned him in regard to what we feared in the way of Berlin machinations is probable, though, of course, I could not know anything for a certainty. Bombelles, Hoyos and Potocki—who was now at the Embassy in London—had taken advantage of one occasion to touch lightly upon the matter and to suggest more guardedness on his part in his goings and comings, and in his familiarities with other societies than his own. The Prince's reception of their warnings proved, I was told afterwards, sufficient to restrain them from adventuring very deeply into the matter, for to the Archduke the very suggestion of officiousness, or even the presence of a busybody in his surroundings, was enough to call forth explosions of an anger which was hardly less than savage in its worst aspects.

As I have told, he was a man of superb athletic development and strength, and, like humbler men, perhaps, he may have looked upon any suggestion that he should take especial precautions for the better safety of his own person as an imputation either on his courage or on his ability to protect himself. This was the view advanced by Bombelles, who probably knew the Archduke better than any of us and certainly was given more latitude by him. Personally, however, I am inclined to take another view: often in speaking of Napoleon, Prince Rudolph had commented on the simplicity of that great soldier, and more than once had recalled the astonishment with which, as historical records tell, his great-aunt, Marie Louise, on her arrival in France, had noted the slight attention which Napoleon paid to the protection of his person. This Archduchess, who had been accustomed to see her Imperial family guarded by relays of sentinels and private police, wondered that the Corsican should have shown so small a regard for his own personal safety in times especially perilous to all who wore the purple. It was the only trace of imitativeness I had noted in the Archduke, but I am sure the example of Napoleon counted for something in this horror he showed at being guarded by soldiers and secret-service men.

Often, too, have I heard him express envy at the "gentleman's freedom"—this was the phrase—of his friend the Prince of Wales, who was accustomed to move about London, or visit the race-courses of

England, *en bon bourgeois*, and I remember his dwelling with a sort of boyish pleasure on the picture of the youthful Prince George of Wales and his sister, the Princess Victoria, inspecting the shop windows of the West End of London unattended, unanxious and almost unobserved. The extraordinary vigilance and caution which Szoegyeni exercised, when warning had been given him, naturally enough went through a cooling process, all the more so because there seemed to be no intention of immediate action on the part of Berlin; or perhaps it may have been that Prussian agents in Vienna had already found venal spirits among those whose duty it was to watch over the Heir of the Habsburgs.

In carrying the narrative over to the close of the year 1888, I may say that already the Archduke's attachment to Mademoiselle Vetsera, renewed and broken again by intervals of absence—or indeed, of disagreements, which were not infrequent—was undergoing its inevitable *dénouement*. And since in this especial case the Archduke appeared—whether through policy or not, I have no knowledge—to look for a final release, while the lady seemed to be desirous of binding him more closely to herself, I think I am right in assuming here that, for once at all events, the theory of my master, regarding princes and their mistresses, was at fault. For certainly, if this poor maid did not love the Archduke, then she was sacrificing both herself and her future in a very senseless way, supposing

ambition to have been the leitmotif of the sacrifice to which few unmarried women of rank will submit, even in the case of an Imperial heir. And in this girl's case it was certainly the most hopeless of ambitions. I was not prejudiced in favour of the young lady, at the first; but I am willing to admit that, at the end, I considered her attachment for the Archduke to be too genuine to admit of the supposition of its being feigned. I remember especially one occasion on which she sought an interview with my master, after one of those misunderstandings which seem to be the unvarying portion of illicit loves. It fell to my lot to be at hand during the momentary absence, in another chamber, of the Archduke, with a Viennese man of affairs, and I shall not easily forget either the beseeching, childish voice, with its strange tones of mingled hope and despair, or the feverish expectancy in the large dark eyes, when she asked my intervention on her behalf.

At the Archduke's command, I conducted her to his private apartments, and my own experience of affairs of this kind was sufficient to allow me to know, when the doors closed on the two lovers, that at least one fair maid was happy in Vienna that afternoon. As the custodian, too, of the correspondence of the Heir-Apparent, I came to know that not only had the Baroness Vetsera written to the Archduke—evidently at the request of the Empress Elizabeth—asking him, for her daughter's sake, to put a term to a *liaison* which was causing unhappiness to both parents and



MADEMOISELLE MARIE VETSERA. JANUARY, 1889.

child, but also I knew of a last note written by Marie Vetsera to her lover, in which she expressed her willingness, in his own interests, to agree that they should not meet again ; a letter, I could well understand, which was only wrung from her at the most painful of costs. Thereafter, I saw her no longer with the Archduke, nor at their usual rendezvous, but passed her several times in the Gardens, where the Vetsera carriages were the most splendid in the capital. And then it was no longer the Marie Vetsera of 1887, full-faced, red-lipped and with a look of smiling defiance in the great eyes, but a prematurely aged girl, listless and worn, with that strange contemplative look which more than once I have noted in those whose days are drawing to their close.

My friend the old Feldkirchian appeared disposed, although closely in touch with Bombelles, I thought, to avoid me, and I had seen him at the close of the year not more than thrice, the last time in the Park, where I met him superbly mounted and looking unusually prosperous. I felt entitled, I must admit, to ask him the cause of this unexpected splendour, and did not hesitate to do so, since he was now in my debt to a very considerable sum. His explanation that a brilliant double-event bet, one which had found much vogue in that year at Vienna—namely, Tenebreuse and Veracity for the English autumn handicaps Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire—had been the source of his new-found wealth, hardly proved satisfactory, nor did my ex-schoolfellow appear

to desire giving any full details of his *coup*, not even to the extent of suggesting that a part of his winnings should be transferred to where they really belonged—namely, my own account. Incidentally, I may say I was among the number of those who had been fortunate enough to touch the Tenebreuse-Veracity double-event, a piece of information which had come to the Archduke from Potocki, who was then in London. As usual, in that unfortunate year—over the close of which a veritable pall of melancholy hung with sinister foreboding—my master failed to take advantage of chances which won fortunes for some of his friends.

It became part of my business, towards the end of 1888, to go through with Count Hoyos all documents relating to his financial affairs, and although we were prepared to discover a huge balance on the wrong side, it was with something like dismay that we found ourselves faced with a total amounting to nearly half-a-million sterling. Herein, I may say, there was a single hand at work which was clearly moved by enmity towards the Archduke. The bulk of the protested notes and bills, which poured in avalanche-wise, were held by Jews, who, it was easily explained at the time, were moved to active hostility to the members of the Imperial family by what had always struck myself as the somewhat insane attitude of Kaiser Franz towards the Hebrew tribe. This explanation was, I learned only too soon and, alas, too late, entirely

false. The scrip relating to the Archduke's debts contracted during the previous few years had been bought up methodically and persistently by an agent in Berlin, whose business-like punctilio in presenting his demands was inspired by something keener than even the commercial acumen of the financial Hebrews of our capital, who, so far as my experience of them went, I always found to be what we usually termed in Vienna white Jews.

CHAPTER XVI

Chez Madame Larricarda—Unpopularity of Myself—Prussians attend her Receptions in Large Numbers—Koinoff a Noteworthy Absentee—Bombelles and Myself—My Last Visit to the Baroness Larricarda's—Some Accomplishments I possess—A Contretemps in the Card-room—A Stiff Retort—Am summoned to the Archduke's Study—Proposed Visit to Meyerling—I am given a Holiday—The Archduke on Game-shooting—The Prince on my Vigilance—What His Highness knew—A Healthy Habsburg Instinct—A Direct Warning from Marie Vetsera—The Archduke's Courage—His Hope for Austria's Future—The Triple Alliance in Practice—The Archduke's Opinion of Wilhelm II.—England's World-Rôle—"Carthage must be destroyed"—His Hopes for Social Democracy—Prince Philip of Coburg

AT least one house in our gay capital seemed unaffected by the indefinable gloom which had cast its shadow over the last days of my master. That was the residence of Madame Larricarda, as I have chosen to call her. I had not ceased to attend her receptions, although I was perhaps the only one of the Archducal coterie who had continued to do so since the Vetsera *liaison* came to a close. At the time, I remember, the fact that other members of the Archduke's "table-company" had ceased to appear at the Baroness's very open house did not awaken any surprise on my part, although the attitude of many of her visitors towards myself might have stirred a certain obtuseness which has ever characterised me in my relations with men and women with

whom I do not happen to be on terms of especial intimacy. Owing to this indifference on my part, it was not, indeed, till towards the last days of January that I began to realise that I seemed no longer to be on the same footing as of old. Not, certainly, so much that my hostess seemed less cordial, as that her attitude, when I paid my respects, appeared to be touched with something of hesitancy and constraint.

On taking stock of the situation at the Baroness's, once I had become conscious of a change of attitude and tone, towards myself, on the part of the majority of her most frequent visitors, I was not long in realising that the Baroness herself appeared to be no longer mistress in her own residence. As I have already told, her receptions were always noted for the number of men of the German *corps diplomatique* whom they attracted. My own frequent visits to Berlin, added to the fact that I had always cultivated a somewhat cosmopolitan detachment of mind in regard to all who spoke German, had had the effect of making me careless as to observing who was Prussian and who Austrian, although the social difference is great, the balance in respect of superiority of manner and general *savoir-faire* being entirely in favour of my countrymen. Awakened to closer observation, I noticed, however, that not only were the Prussians in far greater number than ever, but that only a small fraction of them were at all connected with either diplomatic Berlin or its consular representatives.

Some, indeed, appeared to belong to that motley gathering of sharp individuals who are to be seen on every race-course in Europe—well-dressed, polyglot, easy-mannered and plausible. For Koinoff, in those days, I looked in vain; as one who knew Berlin official and semi-official characters well, he might have given me some valuable information regarding the new arrivals who appeared to be so much at home in the Baroness's establishment. As a member of the Archducal household, I was not—as none of us, indeed, could boast of being—an acceptable person at the Nunciature; consequently I was unable to call there, and in any case, the visit of a person so closely allied to Prince Rudolph must have awakened suspicions which would have been neither to his own benefit nor to that of my rôle of vigilance. With Count Bombelles, moreover, I was not on terms of anything like friendly intercourse towards the close of the year 1888, a state of affairs which was due, I think, to the fact that the Archduke had latterly been accustomed to accord me a degree of intimacy which the old chief equerry resented in one who was not only much younger than himself, but who was also a comparative stranger in a coterie in which, after the Crown Prince, he had formerly played the part of a kind of *eminence grise*. I was hardly, then, unjustified in thinking that the somewhat novel attitude adopted towards me by the ex-scholastic of Feldkirch—an attitude the amusing aspect of which had not escaped my sense of

humour—was due to some suggestion on the part of Bombelles; all the more so, as when I had ventured to question him regarding Koinoff's reliability the Count allowed me to understand that I was concerning myself with matters which did not lie in my province.

The last visit paid by me to Baroness Larricarda's took place, as my records tell me, on Friday, 25th January 1889, and on this occasion, one of somewhat boisterous festivity, I well remember, I was left under no illusion by my hostess's Prussian guests that my presence was no longer looked upon with favour by the gentlemen from Berlin. Here I may say that one of the qualifications which had mainly recommended my humble self to the Archduke was my swordsmanship, an art in which he himself excelled beyond all other men with whom I had ever crossed steel. I was, it may be added, the only one in his entourage capable of meeting him on anything like level terms. Although averse from the sport of slaughtering animals of any sort, I was nevertheless known to be an excellent hand with the duelling-pistol. These were facts with which most men in Berlin and Vienna were well acquainted, and as my bearing was such as invariably won me respect in all male circles, I could regard with equanimity anything like a hostile attitude towards myself on the part of all and sundry who cared to indulge in this form of impertinence. Towards midnight on this particular occasion, finding few of my own acquaintances present, and

feeling that I was avoided for some reason or other by the majority, I wandered towards the card-room, with some vague expectation of finding the Feldkirchian there. As I passed one of the tables at which an unusually spirited set were, Prussian fashion, playing a noisy game, I heard my name loudly called by a man of the party. There was no doubt about the intended offensiveness, for as I turned towards the aggressor he added scornfully:

"Your fellow-student, Koinoff, has shown the white feather and refuses to play the man. Are you hardy enough to play it, Oesterreicher? If so, take a seat and let us see if you are as lucky with the cards as you are said to be with the horses."

I had seen this man on Austrian and German race-courses, but had never made his acquaintance. For a Prussian to address an Austrian as Oesterreicher was held, in those days, I may say, to be a term indicating racial inferiority, as all present knew.

"Sir," I retorted, "I have not the honour of your acquaintance, and do not even know your name. I hope, however, that it is a better one than your manners would seem to indicate."

There was sufficient in what I said to constitute what any Prussian and most Austrians would call a "Beleidigung," or deliberate intention to offend, and my attitude emphasised the sense in which I intended the words to be understood. "Austrian, I certainly am, as you mention it," I added;

"but do not, please, forget that you are also the guest of one."

My Prussian, who had clearly been drinking, hardly expected an answer of this sort, and sought with a weak laugh to give the matter a playful turn.

"Come, now," he replied, "Koinoff has told us all about you. He is your friend, and since he declines the combat, you hold his reputation in your hands."

"Mr Koinoff," I rejoined, "is no doubt equal to the task of protecting his own reputation. He plays with friends. So do I. In this case, that could not be, since I do not know you, and you refuse your name. So be it; you shall at all events have mine. Here it is: any friend of yours who cares to carry your name and requirements to that address shall receive every possible attention. In the meantime, gentlemen, let me not disturb your game. I wish you a very good-night—though to you, sir," I added, addressing my aggressor, "I prefer to say—*au revoir*."

Having delivered myself of this unequivocal little speech and placed my card upon the cable, I left the room and, soon afterwards, the place, for the last time in life. My steps took me to headquarters, where, as I was well aware, the Archduke was busily engaged upon a literary sketch which he had promised to his friend Weilen. It was the custom of his household at such times not to intrude upon his labours, and although I made my presence known to His Highness

through Loschek, his body-servant, in case he should have any commands, I had no expectation of being called to his *petits appartements*. Somewhat to my surprise, however, I received a summons to wait on him, and forthwith proceeded to his cabinet, where I found him in the throes of literary work. Simplicity was the note of every action of the Archduke, as indeed it was a salient characteristic of Kaiser Franz and all the members of this princely tribe, and he worked as any ordinary writer might be expected to work in his study, wearing a short sack-coat of blue silk, and smoking a long-stemmed *rohrpfeife*. He motioned me to a chair beside the fire of blazing logs.

"Some of the game wants thinning at Meyerling," he began, "and I have decided to spend next week there with Prince Philip and Hoyos. So if you have any especial excursion you wish to make I shall be able to dispense with your services during my absence from Vienna. I return, of course, for Monday week—the fourth of February. You are free till then."

A slight pause.

"Your last visit to Meyerling was not a success, I fear," he went on; "otherwise I should have included you in the party. But you do not shoot, I think?"

"My experience with a sporting gun has been limited," I replied, adding: "although I trust so small a matter will not deprive me of the honour of attending on your Highness."

"No," he answered kindly, "you seemed bored

the last time you went down with us. Indeed, I hardly blame you. Slaughtering deer at close range, as we slaughter them, is not very sportsmanlike, I fear. I have stalked them in Scotland, and I think they manage things better over there. At least from the deer's point of view," he added, with a laugh; "there he gets a better chance for his life. No, you had better kill your time in some pleasanter manner during our absence. In any case, correspondence can wait."

Here he rose and took his stand, back to the fire.

"Tell me," he went on, half musingly and with a kindly smile, "little birds have been whispering to me lately. I hear you have been exercising your mind in an endeavour to penetrate the dark mysteries of Berlin's political underworld, and with especial reference to my own personal safety. Now why?"

"I will not attempt to deny the correctness of your Highness's information," was my answer; "but my efforts limited themselves to investigating the truth of rumours which had come to my knowledge."

"And the purport of these rumours was?" he inquired.

"Something very disastrous for our country—without a possibility of doubt!" I replied.

"Meaning, of course, an attempt on the life of the Emperor inspired by—Berlin?" he suggested.

It is an unfortunate condition of royal and

imperial rank that those who can best serve princes are forbidden by a foolish etiquette from speaking to them as ordinary men speak to one another. A humorous fancy crossed my mind just then of Wolfram's Bocher answering such a suggestion, and in my mind's eye I could see him clapping a pair of fat hands upon the shoulders of the Heir of the Habsburgs, as he had done to Wolfram, telling the Archduke he was "a white Jew out of Cracow," and advising him that Berlin was thirsting for all the Habsburg blood in sight. I could not treat His Highness with this wholesome bluntness, so answered tentatively:

"If all rumours are correct, I think that Berlin means to strike very deeply and——"

"—and include myself in its organised assassinations," my master interrupted. "But all this is known to myself and to the Emperor."

It was on my lips to suggest that this being the case, both the Emperor and his Heir would serve their dynasty better by a less generous-minded neglect of precautions for their personal safety; but, again, I wisely remembered and was silent.

"I divine your thought," the Archduke exclaimed. "You think that I expose myself too openly to the attack of the paid assassin. Perhaps I do; perhaps my father does; but believe me, it is the healthy instinct of the Habsburgs."

Here he walked over to his writing-table and searched among some papers.

"You saw my correspondence this morning," the

Prince went on. "Among them you noted one of our own cachet—here it is. Do you know the purport of this communication?" he asked, holding up an envelope.

"I could not guess, indeed," I replied, wondering who his correspondent might be.

"This letter," he explained, "is a solemn warning to me not to go to Meyerling."

I could only express a mute astonishment at what the Archduke told me.

"And could you guess the writer's name? No, you could not, I know. Well," he went on; "I will tell you. The writer was Mademoiselle Vetsera."

I was certainly not prepared to hear this bit of information, and looked the surprise I felt.

"This young lady," the Archduke proceeded, "is, as you may have heard, somewhat mystical in character. Of the sincerity of her intention I have no doubt. But do you think a thousand warnings would keep me from carrying out any programme I had decided on?"

"Unfortunately I am afraid not, Highness," I replied, and noted his answering laugh.

"I think sufficiently highly of the princes of Europe," he replied, "to dare say that there is none who would allow the fear of death to prevent him from carrying out a set purpose. I doubt, however, if it could even enter into the mind of us Habsburgers to do so, and this, again, is what I call one of the wholesome instincts of the race. We may pass, but the throne remains. What does

it matter which of us succeeds—myself or another?"

"The popular parties repose large hopes in your political activities," I replied. "It would be a bad thing for our country if the popular movement were arrested; I would even say a dangerous thing for its integrity."

"Do you remember that Napoleon once said he was more necessary to France than France was to him?" the Archduke answered. "Well, that is precisely the position in which the Habsburgs stand towards Europe, and as long as we hold that position, the integrity of our Empire is safe. He will be a poor Habsburger who loses the Imperial throne irretrievably for our House and I will admit that only a Habsburger can hold the Empire together. Bismarck realised this in 1866 when the Prussian armies marched to within sight of the Hofburg towers, although his master, King William, was already anxious then to put Pan-Germanism to the test—to disintegrate the dominions, in other words. Had the attempt been made at that time, Europe would have risen in arms to prevent it, and Austria would have been reinstated in her headship of Germanic Europe. Our eclipse is not a permanent one, believe me, and we shall yet regain the headship of All-Germany. It is the logic of the map, and we are the only power in Germany able to hold it with unquestioned right and with Europe's respect. Napoleon saw this when he regretted, at St Helena, not having dismembered Prussia

and reduced it to its original proportions under the Elector. Fortunately the Habsburgs exist, so it is not necessary to invent us."

"But the Triple Alliance," I suggested; "it surely makes for the paramountcy of Prussia?"

"The Triple Alliance," replied the Prince, "is only a Triple Alliance on paper and in theory. As long as England owns a navy, she can decide absolutely the question of Italy's adherence to the terms of that document. Bismarck knows this. In practice it can only be a Dual Alliance, with a very half-hearted adherence on the part of Austria. Indeed, *force majeure* obliged Austria to enter into it; the alternative was attack by Prussia. And against a European coalition, I can imagine but one ending. My father has shown greater prevision than men have credited him with. Austria stands to win in any event. With the break-up of Prussian militarism, the Confederation must fall. Bavaria and Saxony are with us at heart. The House of Habsburg still holds the best cards in all Germany, so far as I can see."

"Would your Highness say," I asked, "if the new *régime* in Prussia is likely to precipitate the long-prophesied war?"

"With so neurotic a sovereign as the new Emperor," the Archduke replied, "one can never prophesy along conventional lines. If his speeches prove the measure of his character, then I should admit the approach of war as highly probable, since he rarely speaks without antagonising

Europe. There, however, we enter into the domain of what his Chancellor has aptly termed *imponderabilia*. Arguing from the long-set programme of Prussia, we are on safer grounds, and myself I think war a certainty of the future; all the more so as it aims, by incorporating the Netherlands in the Confederation, at the establishment of a great navy along an extended sea-board. Here England enters into the case, and it is very much to be doubted if she will look on idly at the building of a large naval force in the Baltic, which may well threaten her very sovereignty. In the days of Pitt such a plan and programme would never have gone beyond the stage of a suggestion or a dream. With its realisation in the custody of such a man as Kaiser Wilhelm, an enslaved world would witness the spectacle of a German Empire supported by the twin bulwarks of militarism and navalism, and the assured revival of Feudalism for a cycle of years. This is why 'Carthage must be destroyed' again, and it is also the reason why I have always held that the very existence of Britain and her possession of a naval power which she has not abused, almost point to providential intervention in human affairs. And again, it points the logic of my philosophy that Austria's loss of the headship of Germanic Europe is not a permanent one. But we are not going back to the Dark Ages; *les peuples sont trop éclairés*, as Napoleon remarked to Roederer on the day following his Coronation in 1804—the nations are becoming too enlightened,

and even in the Confederation there is now growing into manhood a giant which may save Germany from its insanities; it is called Social Democracy."

I was far from displeased at the prospect of not having to go to Meyerling, in the first place, because I am not a willing slayer of life, and secondly, because my *congé* would enable me to avoid a meeting with Prince Philip of Coburg, a man of sinister presence and, in my own opinion, one whose friendship towards my master did not stand the test of a close analysis. That Mademoiselle Vetsera should have directly warned the Archduke not to proceed to Meyerling was a matter which gave me much whereon to ponder.

CHAPTER XVII

Prince Rudolph as Sportsman—His Exploits in Danubian Countries—A Student of Zoological Traits—Some Deductions from his Studies—An Emersonian Bias—Game-hunting in German Countries—A Chapter from *Cornhill*—A Favourite Keeper—The Ritual of Deer-hunting—Tracking the Roe—Placing the Guns—Beaters at Work—Routing out the Game—Some Democratic Touches—Congratulations on Sportsmanship—A Processional Return Homewards—The Song of the Beaters

PRINCE RUDOLPH, it is well known, had written several notable works, one a description of the Danube, with particular reference to the zoological aspects of its vast forestries. He had hunted the chamois in Styria, trapped wolves on the Lower Danube and helped to thin out the deer wilds of Under Austria and South Germany generally, for he was ever a welcome addition to all the great sporting estates within easy reach of our capital. I often doubted, however, if he found any real pleasure in slaying animals, and, indeed, Dr Udel once assured me that his hunting excursions were mainly designed with a view to studying at close range the traits and habits of the beasts of the forest. He had also made a protracted investigation into the beaver colonies of the Danubian reaches, and was said to have observed that the result of his observations had forced him into a stronger realisation than ever that man's claim

to be endowed with a divinely created intelligence was the outcome of arrogance and pride.

As he grew older and read more profoundly—and there has been no more deeply read prince in the history of the world—it was easy to note that his mind became touched with that inevitable melancholy that follows upon philosophical speculation which pathetically enough seeks to reconcile things as they are with the claim of those religious teachers who maintain that there is a better world to come. He had observed, among animals in the wilderness, I once heard him say, every evidence of an elementary morality which was based on a natural law of possession; among domesticated animals this sense grows into something akin to a rudimentary code, and in the higher types we find unmistakable indications that they possess the quality of self-respect, which is a safe enough basis for those moral ideas which, in the case of man, ultimately find their efflorescence in a religious law. His mind was, indeed, drifting towards the Emersonian idea of "Compensation" as affording a sufficiently sound explanation of such ideas as conscience and honour as the basis of a religion, but which, of course, does not pretend to foreshadow a future existence. As to that future existence, I am certain that the Archduke Rudolph believed in none, though his intimates more than once heard him declare that he would willingly have gone back to the unquestioning beliefs of his early years—the inevitable despair, I think, of most men

who have studied the history of human thought and action.

Returning to the question of the Prince's love of the chase, I may say that he indulged in sporting pursuits for just such reasons as induce many an Englishman to follow hounds or range the moors —with the object, namely, of keeping in good condition. About the business of the chase, too, I have remarked, in German countries, a certain amount of what I can only call infantility of procedure and action and nothing like sportsmanly regard for the animal which affords the fun—a trait which many English game-hunters have remarked upon at parties which I have attended. In an excellent English magazine, the *Cornhill*, which finds much vogue in our country, I once read an article dealing with deer-hunting in South Germany, and as it records in perfect detail the programme of one of those excursions in the properties over which the Archduke used to shoot, I here reproduce in part, as affording English readers some idea of our sporting ways :

Rising to dress by candle-light, peering out into the darkness to discern the state of the weather, snatching a hurried and imperfect breakfast, driving in a cramped conveyance along a dull white road between long and silent stretches of forest, with the damp, grey night-mist still dragging slowly over the firs and with the cold barrels of a gun numbing one's fingers—such are

the ordinary preliminaries to a day's shooting in German countries. When the hot strong sun of the south gathers up these mist-clouds and sends them rolling away westward, when the hills along the horizon begin to show themselves of a gloomy green, when a clearance in the great forest around you shows a large many-windowed wooden chalet with projecting roof, as ruddy in its deep brown hues as any hut of the Swiss valleys, you are led to expect something entirely different from the steady, business-like and rather tame pursuit of partridges which generally follows the drive to cover in England. A hen capercailzie, with her great brown wings outstretched, sails quickly overhead; a fox stands quietly in an adjacent field and watches you drive past; a blue hare flashes across the road and disappears into the wood. No; this is clearly not England.

But the drive over—what then? Another of those great wooden chalets comes into view, the strong sunlight making its rich brown gables almost red, and there are people walking about and vehicles in front of the door, and over the window a noble painting which bears the legend "Zum Weiszen Adler"—At the sign of the White Eagle. Those boys outside have borrowed a holiday from the national school in order to form a corps of beaters, and they are already receiving jerky and half-grumbling instructions from one of the Prince's keepers—the ancient, phlegmatic, morose and picturesque Schaller. Imagine a little man dressed wholly in grey and green with

a large slouched hat adorned with jay's feathers, a thin brownish-white face, a large nose, a big black moustache and small deep-set eyes, a horn slung round his neck, a gun pendent from one shoulder and a cartridge bag of roe-skin hanging from the other. He is one of the oldest and most experienced of the Prince's keepers, and it is his proud boast that he is the only one whom the Prince addresses as "Du." The other keepers are inside in the spacious, low-roofed, eight-windowed room which is the chief glory of each small hostelry: and through the haze of badly-smelling tobacco-smoke, we can dimly discern their short, brawny figures, clad in the same picturesque dress which Schaller wears, though for the most part they have bushy brown beards and moustaches on their sun-tanned faces.

In a little while the party is mustered on the road outside. The Prince's overseer for this district, a splendid fellow with immense shoulders and arms, leads the way, attended by two or three sportsmen who have been included in the invitation —each one in gaiters, decorated stalker's hat and jacket, with horn, pouch and dispatching-knife.

"Vorwärts, alle in Gottes Namen," shouts our chief, mindful of the fact that hunting has its ritual. Every gun, with its green strap affixed, is thrown over each shoulder and we all stride forward.

The slight wind now blows in the direction in which we are marching; it is necessary, therefore, to go to the extreme end of the ground to be

traversed and work backward, for there are few animals which possess so intensely keen a scent as the roe, and the greatest caution has to be exercised in order to keep to leeward of them. In some districts where the roe lie in small covers and are likely to be scared away altogether if driven too hard by dogs, it is sufficient to send in a few beaters who do not even make the peculiar rattling noise with which they ordinarily arouse the deer. The mere scent of the beaters is enough to send the roe on lightly towards the sportsman who, in such a case, generally gets an easy shot. On this morning, however, we were plentifully provided with dogs—beagles, with heads of the usual beagle type and size, little body and no legs to speak of, but merely squat stumps, exceedingly thick and muscular, with large, soft outwardly-turned paws. These animals possess the merit of working slowly and steadily and never tire and, despite their apparent limitations, make their way through the mossy swamps and the thick bush and bracken much more easily than one would imagine. The Prince's huge black hound, Hector, invaluable in tracking wounded deer, is the only dog of large proportions present.

"Gentlemen," cries a well-known local trapper and huntsman, who acts as a kind of master of ceremonies, "whosoever shoots on old hare shall be fined a crown, to be exacted from him on the spot. Young hares you may shoot as you please."

This speech is part of the ritual—indeed, a kind of joke and everybody laughs; although we

are well aware that not only are we forbidden to shoot the doe, but also capercailzie and foxes which are considered good shooting, and are rarely hunted in German forests, their principal rôle in life being the destruction of young roe and the despoiling of poultry-farms. Suddenly the party comes to a halt. The keepers cluster round the local sportsman, or master of ceremonies, who gives each man his appointed place and instructions. Schaller draws off his troop of men, boys and dogs, and disappears into the forest. We too enter the thick woods, but by a different bridle-path. Here there is no underwood; down between the lichen grey stems of the magnificent pines and firs, the sunlight falls in great shafts and lights up the soft, springy green moss into a brilliant orange and gold. Occasionally we cross a deep glade which runs into some unseen valley, and in one of these glades the underwood begins. Our posts are assigned us. In all such *battues* there are one or two stations which are known by long experience to be the best—the preferable of these two, called the *Hauptplatz*, or principal place, being generally marked with the initial of the person who is considered the guest of honour. On the occasion of my outing with the guns, I found myself assigned to a post behind a large pine, about twenty yards from the underwood of larch and birch, and almost opposite two deer-tracks which converged on one point. Fortunately mine was not the Hauptplatz.

When all the posts have been filled, each man must hold up his hand, thus conveying to his next neighbour an intimation of his exact position, a duty which no one who has felt a charge of shot whiz by his ear will ever neglect. Presently we heard a long low blast from the horn of the keeper who was at the extreme end of the guns—a message to Schaller announcing our readiness for action. This signal was replied to by a fine flourish from Schaller himself, and it is not until this reply is given that the guns are supposed to be on the alert. Far off we could hear the drivers at work, striking the trees with their staves and uttering a loud "purr" that echoed through the wood. Then with a joyful roar, two of the dogs gave tongue and the sharp music rang through the stillness of the wood, but was yet far distant, the sounds becoming fainter or louder, allowing us to trace the course of the hounds as they worked in different directions. Then out of the perfect silence of the tall brushwood leapt a beautiful deer in a shining coat of yellow-brown, and not thirty yards away, a handsome buck; but both escaped, the attention of the gun on the Hauptplatz being temporarily diverted — much to my satisfaction. Hector, baying and rushing like a fiend, nosed out two does and a little fawn hardly much longer in the body than a hare. The first doe passed through the brushwood like a flash of lightning; the second one, evidently the mother, kept by its side, and both came so near to me that I could have

accounted for them both with one barrel. In a short time the sound of the beaters came closer, the boys struggling through the young firs, and a flourish of the horn brought us together in one group. My account of the way in which I had sacrificed a beautiful pair of buck-horns did not appear quite satisfactory, and though, of course, no complaint was uttered, I felt that keepers and beaters had their own opinion of my sportsmanship.

Our next effort proved a blank and only a few doe were turned out by hounds, an occasional fox being startled—forbidden game, however. A third beat was more successful, dogs giving tongue at once and several buck fell to the guns. The drive over, up walks the nearest keeper to the fortunate sportsman and offering his hand with profuse compliments congratulates him on having secured a splendid pair of horns, finishing this ceremony by sticking a sprig of young fir in the shooter's hat—a sprig for every buck that has fallen to his gun. Again, we plunged into the forest for a fourth drive, an unusually long one, and a considerable time elapsed before the horn announced the setting of the guns. In the interval which ensued between the answering flourish of the horn a splendid buck was seen passing rapidly along our front, making for a mass of young trees which must certainly allow him to escape. Giving him a single barrel, I failed to stop his progress, and fired the second as he broke into the brushwood. Presently I

heard a long, deep groan and fearing to leave my post in case a charge of shot should come rattling round my ears, I re-loaded just in time to catch a doe hunted by Hector, and by bringing the animal down at least saved my reputation. As the keepers approached to congratulate me, a loud whirring noise overhead attracted my attention. It was a fine cock-capercailzie and I had the satisfaction of tumbling it down at the feet of the occupant of the Hauptplatz, who in his own kindly way congratulated me on having done my humble share of justice to his preserves.

The return homewards was in the nature of a procession, the whole party marching along the winding roadway to the Lodge, boys in front carrying the various heads which had fallen to the guns and occasionally breaking into the local hunting-songs, one of which still haunts my ears:

Im Wald und auf der Haide
Da such' ich meine Freude
Ich bin ein Jäger's Mann,
Ich bin ein Jäger's Mann.
Den Wald und Forst zu hegen
Das Wildpret zu erlegen,
Das ist's was mir gefällt,
Das ist's was mir gefällt
Halli, hallo, halli, hallo, halalli.
Das ist's was mir gefällt
Halli, hallo, halalli!
Halli, hallo, halalli.

CHAPTER XVIII

Prince Rudolph's alleged Suicidal Mania—The Philosophy of Suicides—Pessimists and Optimists—Napoleon's Ideas on Suicide those of the Archduke—Reasons against the Theory of Prince Rudolph's Suicide—26th January 1889—The Archduke's Ideas about German Actors and the Theatre in General—"Elemental Men and Simians"—An Improvised Comedy—The Archduke as Stage Napoleon—Bismarck and Playgoers—Ideas about Music—"Cleverly harmonised Rumpus"—Wagner's Hypnotic Powers—A Theory of Success in Life—Wagner and the Artistic Temperament—Archducal Ideas on Painting and Literature—A Visit to the Rubens Gallery—Art and a Physiological Question

WRITERS who have touched circumstantially on the short if somewhat complex annals of the life of the Archduke Rudolph seem to agree in the view that from earliest manhood the idea of suicide was constantly present to his mind. They emphasise the fact all the more firmly because of the alleged self-murder of his blood-kinsman, King Ludwig of Bavaria, in 1886, and again on the ground that in all the members of the Wittelsbach family there ran a potent strain of eccentricity which was hardly differentiable from impulsive insanity. The Archduke was, therefore, they argue, predisposed, by hereditary influences, to those maniacal ideas which often culminate in self-destruction. Acute eccentricity was, they conclude, not less marked in himself than in other members of his family, and his method of life

pointed to the probability of a violent end. All which views are, I may say, those of observers from the distant outside.

My rôle shall certainly not be that of the *peisithanatos*, or counsellor of death, as the Greeks called a certain philosophic pundit who advocated suicide as the easiest solution of the misery of being alive. Nevertheless, I maintain that such a philosophy was not entirely without some reasonable foundation of its own, and, in my opinion, few men can reflect seriously on the ponderable advantages and values which even the lengthiest and most successful life can offer, and —if they possess a humour-sense, a proportion-sense and, above all, a time-sense—not turn with despair from the abysmal inanity of the prospect offered to the candidate for, say, a seventy-year span of life. In another place I have expressed the view that plodding pessimists really rule the world, and, indeed, hope to be gathered to a vaster void strong in that pious belief. So-called optimism, or delight in this best of all possible worlds, is not only the philosophy of the impossibly philosophic ; it is also the cloak with which frank and logical enough Philistines seek either to hide from the world their own villainies, or from themselves and others, the villainies of which they are the victims.

Certainly, I admit, I often heard my master discuss the question of suicide, and if I was not positive that his sense of duty to his own august House, as well as to his Fatherland, was not as strong as that which is the first great unquestionable

characteristic of his father, Kaiser Franz, I should incline to the view that he was of the type of philosopher who is capable of self-annihilation in order—for all Hamlet's doubts upon the subject—to release himself from the consciousness of being alive. Men who knew him will remember well a phrase of Napoleon's which was often on his lips: "*Il faut vouloir vivre et savoir mourir*—we must will to live and know how to die"; a philosophy in this matter which the great soldier acted up to, even as he did in the matter of religion, solely for considerations connected with the dynasty he had founded—my own view, of course. Again, however, I have to say that Prince Rudolph followed the French Emperor's reasoning in another phase of the question.

The Corsican, it will be remembered, held that if life became a burden, either physically or psychically, to any man, he was justified in self-destruction, providing—Napoleon emphasised the condition—that his suicide caused no detriment to others, and that its motive was not to release the suicide from heavy obligations to himself, to his relatives, or to his country. If, however, added the Corsican, a man be moved to the act of despair simply because Fortune appears to have deserted him, he at any rate refused to condone suicide, and on the ground that ever-changeful Fortune, which frowns to-day, is quite as likely to smile to-morrow. Had his attachment to his country and its fortunes been a less salient trait in my master; had the succession been so established as to assure the best

interests of Austria-Hungary remaining stable and hopeful; had the Archducal *ménage* been a source of fretfulness to him, or even had his health of mind and body suggested anything like life-weariness, then I might have admitted a strong presumption for the view that he had premeditated self-destruction. None of the above conditions, however, pointed any way but in his favour, and, given his gay demeanour and *abandon* on the last evening on which he met his personal coterie, the tragedy of Meyerling, to those who were with him in that final symposium, came with a shock that well-nigh unseated reason itself.

It was on the night of 26th January 1889 that a few of his more favoured personal friends met him for the last time at the Hofburg. The hour, for ordinary persons, was late, and the Archduke had returned from the theatre, of which form of entertainment, if light opera be excepted, he was no very strict devotee. Indeed, it became with him a commonplace vow, which in the end we all came to look upon as a jest, that he would attend no more theatrical representations. My countrymen, particularly those of the capital, are hardened enough theatre-goers, and the Archduke's indifference to the drama was a trait which, if it did not offend, at least puzzled most of his intimates. To myself, however, it appeared to indicate the essential seriousness of his character, for though I am a willing spectator of well-enacted dramatic pieces, I am no believer in the

theory that there is anything like serious educative principle underlying the art of the stage.

Prince Rudolph, moreover, often gave utterance to the sentiment that he found it hard to understand in Napoleon the extraordinary interest which that wonderful intellect displayed in the drama—he the greatest and most real of all the genuine enactors of the world's history, as he used to declare.

"I divide men," he said, on this night, "into two categories—elemental men and simians, and of all the sorry simians of creation, the stage-actor is the most ridiculous and most tragical, since he must be essentially wanting in the first characteristic of intellectual worth, namely, reasoned self-consciousness. Enacting to-day the rôle of a statesman, to-morrow that of a soldier, the day after the part of a *Scapin*—bah, what possible fixity of character can such beings possess, and what claim can characterless creatures of this kind reasonably advance to teach the public how a Richelieu, a Cromwell, a Cæsar thought, or looked, or acted in the various crises of their lives? I have seen Napoleon depicted on the stage and anything more *dénaturé* and unlike the intensely elemental and natural figure of the somewhat bourgeois Corsican I could not imagine. Do I, does any educated person, require an inferior mind to represent to me the real Cæsar whom I can re-construct for myself from authentic history, or a Hamlet whom only a philosophic mind can conjure up? *Scapin*, yes and all the comedy of

Molière—actors who can make us forget that we exist; or women on the stage—yes, here we are on safe ground, for it is woman's right to display her charms and *petits talents* as publicly as possible. And I will always make an exception, too, for singers of both sexes, for here it is possible to establish a standard, and the gift of great song is assuredly a divine gift. But to witness the effort of a skinny mummer trying to depict a Cromwell or a Napoleon—yes, especially Bonaparte—oh, heaven protect us!"

The Archduke possessed a sense of comedy which was extremely amusing when he cared to exercise it in imitating the ludicrous solemnities and ponderous attitudes of personages with whom he came at times in contact. To see the great and serious unbend in this way is not only very charming, but can also be excruciatingly funny, and Bismarck, to my own knowledge, was also eminently successful in amusing his favourites with this form of social entertainment. The Archduke's imitation of the stage-Bonaparte was exceptionally good: the Corsican embracing his Empress—with a scowl; or ordering Constant to bring the historic hat—with arms folded, shoulders raised and a satanic chin buried in his breast; or giving simple instructions to an aide-de-camp—hands clasped behind the hips and an eye to make a centaur quail; or dictating to Bourrienne—his face pale with anger and his gestures full of fury. I have never seen Napoleon represented on the stage, and if this be the Corsican

of drama, have no desire to experience a disillusionment.

"But," objected Neumann, "the German is not a natural actor, and your Highness knows what Bismarck says of the serious German drama: the upper orders go in order to learn how *not* to act in their own lives; the educated orders go to ridicule; while the lower order goes only to see the other two."

"Nevertheless," replied the Prince, "bad drama gives the public an entirely false conception of history, and worse still a false idea of the classes which rule them. You quote Bismarck; he has also said, you remember, that a nation which cannot produce good actors cannot produce good diplomatists. And there I am in entire agreement with him."

By an easy transition the conversation passed to a discussion of other departments of art, about which none of us was at all enthusiastic, I may say. In music—for which I have myself little ear—the Archduke's taste inclined mainly to the Hungarian type, although he called Beethoven, and I am told, called him correctly, the greatest of all composers. Wagnerian music he once declared to be "cleverly harmonised rumpus," and on this particular night he repeated the expression, adding that the devotees of Wagner were for the most part the victims of a self-delusion based on suggestion.

"The career of a charlatan like Wagner," said the Prince, "almost supplies me with a new theory

of success in life. Wagner, it seems clear enough, possesses in a powerful degree the gift of hypnotising his own circle of intimates—most of whom, you know, are men of influence in literary and journalistic circles. Well, now, when Doctor Wagner composes, let us suppose, an especially uproarious phase of music, he invites his friends to hear him play it over. He plays it over and they listen. 'That,' says the Doctor impressively, 'represents a blizzard in the Alps'; and Wagner has that especial kind of mental influence which easily imposes on men of the satellite temperament, including a gift of words and imagery by which he easily seduces the minds of his friends into an acceptance of his claims and explanations. Accordingly, his circle of intimates, self-hypnotised with the belief that they are in the presence of the wonderful, make haste—as much in their own as in their patron's interest, be it understood—to make known to the world the fact that the Doctor's genius has broken out in a fresh place."

"Oh, but I beg of your Highness," deprecatingly said Hoyos, "to remember that the modern world is divided into men, women and Wagnerites. Hypnotism—yes, I grant its influence. But hypnotism that breaks up families, that splits the hemispheres, that affects to provide the measure of good taste and bad taste—oh, I give it up."

"My poor Hoyos," returned the Archduke, with affected concern for the Chamberlain, "all this is the theory of success in life to which I am coming. What, for instance, is the end of life? Why, self-

expression; and the man who expresses himself most forcefully is the man who goes farthest. In politics, in literature, in journalism, in religion, in business—every man who succeeds has done so by virtue of the fact that he has made himself the centre of a circle all the other members of which diffuse his ideas centrifugal-fashion. Do you remember, gentlemen, that Napoleon invented a theory in war that 'one should never manœuvre save round a fixed point—*il ne faut manœuvrer qu'autour d'une pointe fixe*'? Well, here you have the real strategy of life which has been practised in all ages by those who possessed ambition and the ability to impose their ideas on men who were content to play subsidiary rôles and carry out the ideas involved. It is the theory on which task-industry is founded, and never fails to produce results. Some of these ideas are sound, others unsound; but the strategy works in all cases, given the organisation, and in the case of social movements and religious sects which spring up mushroom-wise day by day, this is certainly the principle at work—a question of one central influence and submission on the part of the satellites. *Voyons donc*, it is the atomic idea —the principle of our own universe. Are we not children of the Sun?"

"Accordingly, then," said the Baron, with, I thought, some want of tact, "your Highness would say that real ability does not rule the world —or rarely; for what man of real and originating ability consents to be a satellite?"

"That is entirely the view, my dear Neumann," returned the Prince; "real ability sometimes rules the affairs of men, but certainly not always. It is largely a question of hypnotising others into a belief in an idea and yourself. If Archimedes had been a politician instead of a mathematician, he would have asked for an idea, not a lever. And this accounts, too, for Napoleon's hatred of what he called the *ideologue*. Every clever man with a fixed idea was a menace to the system of which the Corsican was the central sun."

"And Wagner," said Hoyos, who was musically disposed, "is then to be accounted among the disseminators of unsound notions?"

"So far as myself is concerned—certainly, Hoyos," replied the Archduke, "though I am not a great musician, as you know. His appeal is not necessarily made to artists, although many, I believe, have given him their adherence. I should say rather that he finds his suffrages mainly among those who possess what they claim to be the artistic temperament. I have met many sane artists, but I have never yet met one of them boast of the possession of the artistic temperament. That seems to be the privilege of non-performers or non-executants who wish to advertise to properly self-possessed people that, under the influence of, say, a picture of which they do not understand the technique, or of music which only titivates their spinal cords, their emotions become too powerful for their self-restraint. I have watched these animals at the Opera. They remind me

of old virgins who have decided not to die guessing."

There was, in my opinion, too much of the soldier-statesman in the Archduke Rudolph to permit of anything like dilettantism, and, indeed, I think that Political Economy, History and Labour questions interested him far more than any other study except Ornithology, in which he was a notable expert among experts. Accordingly when at our last symposium we turned on the question of Painting, it was not surprising to find—as I had long known, of course—that in the matter of the various Schools he was hardly much better informed than myself, his tastes leaning mainly to art-work, which made a direct appeal to his historical sense or to his sense of physical beauty as shown in portraiture.

"In Art I find hardly less affectation," he said, "than in Music and Literature. Of Music I know very little, and in German Literature I will follow Prince Bismarck to the extent of making anyone who asks a present of three-fourths of all that Goethe has written and still undertake to possess *all* Goethe—the real Goethe. Shakespeare and Molière contain the whole conspectus of life for myself, and if I want genre life I can find it in Jokai or in Henri Conscience the Fleming. In Art, Meissonier suits my historical sense, and in portraiture Sarto. The sombre tints of the Roman and Bolognese schools attract me in preference to the vivid colouring of the Venetian artists, and though the Crown Princess preaches Rubens to me

as a kind of religion, I cannot accept his types. And this reminds me," he added gaily, " of a visit I once paid to Antwerp to the Rubens Gallery in that city with Arthur Potocki. It was during a family visit to Brussels that the Archduchess suggested my renewing acquaintance with the Flemish painter, and perhaps correcting my vicious taste, as Her Highness put it. Accordingly Potocki and myself made our way to Antwerp, and though neither of us was especially interested we decided to visit the Gallery out of regard for the wishes of the Archduchess.

" At the Rubens Gallery, as you probably will know, there is a famous triptych the wing-pictures of which represent Adam to the left, Eve to the right—life-size figures in the *tout ensemble*, and in the course of our progress through the great galleries we duly arrived in front of the triptych, where I was to hear, as it happened, one of the most extraordinary comments yet made on the pictorial art, and, of all men, from Arthur Potocki, who knows less than I do myself about such matters. In those days Potocki wore a monocle, and on arriving in front of our triptych he adjusted the eyeglass and began to study the nude figures of both Adam and Eve in an unusually fixed and studious way—so fixedly and studiously, indeed, and with such obvious ostentatiousness, that I was moved by curiosity to watch him. He paid no heed to myself, however, but continued to gaze at each figure, walking now to one and then to the other, indulging at the same time in a little

snuffling kind of laugh for which I could not account, and which I considered very unseemly. I wished to continue our progress, and suggested that we should move on, and, as he appeared not to hear me, did so myself. When about ten yards away from him, I turned round, only to behold him still gazing with profound fascination at the figures in the triptych. As visitors were also beginning to note his attitude, I returned to him and again suggested that we should continue our progress. For answer he pointed to the figures.

"'That is Adam there, is it not?' he asked vacantly. 'And of course this is Eve? Wonderful, wonderful!'

"'Come, Potocki, you are making yourself ridiculous,' I protested; 'and people are beginning to stare. Let us continue.'

"'Well,' he replied, 'all that may be very good Art, for what I know. But it's very bad physiology.'

"'Indeed!' I rejoined, somewhat irritably. 'Perhaps you will be good enough to explain how.'

"'Why, your Highness,' he replied, 'if these figures represent Adam and Eve, why, in the name of all that's wonderful, were they painted with navels? Where the devil did they get navels?'

"Which went to show that Potocki was at least a good pre-Raphaelite," added the Prince.

The Archduke bade us good-bye towards the early morning hours. This was the last occasion on which I saw my master alive and touched his hand.

CHAPTER XIX

The Crown Lands of Baden—The Schloss of Meyerling—Formerly a Cistercian Convent—The Archducal Apartments—Late Hours at the Lodge—A Message from His Highness—A Visit to the Hofburg Library—I meet Wolfram—Decide on a Sojourn at Heiligen Kreuz—A *Rencontre* at the Southern Station—Another Surprise at Baden—A Walk to Heiligen Kreuz—Herr Wirt of the Gasthaus—His Archducal Visitor—A Bottle of Tokay—A Rough Quartette of Prussians—My Landlord's Recollections—The Witch of Alland—A Prophecy to Kaiser Franz—My Servant fails me—Only appears at Breakfast-time—His Adventures in the Night—The Road to Meyerling and back to the Kreuz

BADEN lies about twenty miles to the south of Vienna, and consists for the most part of Imperial Crown lands, with princely establishments and appurtenances of the Habsburg family—castles occupied mainly by members of the grand archducal family whose number is large. To the west of Baden, running in a northerly direction through a thickly wooded district of highland and vale, are the village-towns of Heiligen Kreuz or Holy Cross, and Alland. Beyond these, and at a distance of about fourteen miles from Baden, is Meyerling, lying in a valley, a most romantic spot, the inhabitants of which number not more than one hundred people. Approaching the hamlet by the high road and before descending into the vale, the first important object on the landscape is the Schloss, which stands on the only eminence within the narrow radius. The Schloss

of Meyerling has nothing particularly princely in its aspect and consists of several straggling houses with round and pointed towers, the buildings a washy white, according to the mountain fashion and altogether suggesting the residence of a prosperous minor squire or retired Viennese business man. A deer park of generous extent encircles the Castle, timbered mainly with pine or spruce, and sloping to the several roads which cut the main highway, south and south-west, at sharp angles, the whole estate being enclosed by a wall some miles in circumference.

Whether or not the Schloss was the private purchase of the Archduke, or whether it belonged to the Imperial Crown, I am now unable to recollect. I know, however, that in the years of my association with His Highness at least one building was added to the five which already composed the entire Castle. A melancholy, indeed, an eerie and forbidding spot—it was said formerly to have been the site of a Cistercian society of monks, and since the tragedy of 1889 it has become the home of a sisterhood of Trappist nuns who daily offer up expiatory prayers for the crime that removed Rudolph of Habsburg. When the Cistercian body owned the place I do not know, but recollect to have heard that the old ex-Emperor Ferdinand I. had once expressed an intention, towards the end of his life, of retiring into the brotherhood which then occupied the Schloss. Apart from the melancholy aspect of the property, which is, moreover, a characteristic

of most of the mountain estates of Lower Austria, Meyerling was a shooting lodge typical of the country, and the Archduke preferred it to any of the several more splendid boxes which lay within a radius of thirty miles, and which, as Crown property, were always at his disposal.

The central dwelling was that occupied by Prince Rudolph, and consisted of the usual pieces, mostly broad and large rooms, though not lofty. There was a distinctly sporting suggestion, not unmixed with some fleeting idea of a farmhouse, or a trainer's residence, about the place, and if melancholy was the tone of the outside, a homely cheeriness was certainly that of the interior, while the simplicity of the entire Schloss was thoroughly in harmony with that marked unaffectedness which is salient in the Habsburg family, and which trait, indeed, I have found to be characteristic in the really high-placed in any country I am acquainted with. On the ground floor, and looking out upon the south-west portion of the estate, was the Archduke's unusually large sleeping-chamber—a hall rather than a room, and covered with heavily mounted sporting trophies of a hundred kinds. It had two large and lofty windows, shuttered, Tyrolese-fashion, from the outside, and between these windows, some twenty feet apart, was the broad oaken bedstead, four-posted and testered, but untapestried. At the north extremity of this chamber was a small study with one spacious window. To the right and left of the corridor

from which the Archduke's private apartment opened, were dining and reception halls, as well as the offices of the steward, Loschek, who occasionally acted as body-servant to the Archduke in Vienna.

This central dwelling was, I may add, the quietest of the group of houses which formed the Schloss, since it was occupied only by the Archduke, or by a possible guest, also by the steward, and was distant from the noise and bustle associated with the work of country establishments. The entire Castle and its various buildings were connected by a series of large and much betrophied halls. The stabling and the harness-rooms were at the north of the Schloss, where never more than a dozen horses were stalled at any time. The Archducal parties rarely exceeded half-a-dozen guns; sporting began usually about seven or half-past seven in the morning, and though his hours were more frequently on the irregular than on the regular side—for the exchange of ideas was the passion of his life, and he talked till all hours—the Prince was invariably the first to welcome his guests, and rarely missed the opportunity of a good morning's sport—a fact to which he attributed his splendid powers of recuperation, for, as I have told before, my master lived his life to the very full.

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Having, on the night of our last symposium with the Archduke, said farewell to His Highness, I returned, since I was on leave, to my apartment

by the Hofgarten, where my man, Conrad Bratfisch, held the fort, as, humorous hind, he was himself accustomed to tell me. The morrow being Sunday, I rose late, and in the early afternoon, trained to Wagram, where lived, in villa retirement, an old Canon of St Stephen's, a distant kinsman, with whom I very occasionally passed an evening in pleasant conversation. Returning about midnight, I retired immediately, nor woke till Conrad brought me a cup of coffee and the time—nearly ten, an unusually late hour for myself, an early riser. About noon on Monday two letters arrived simultaneously, one by special messenger from the Hofburg—his cousin Joseph Bratfisch, as my man at once informed me, for the Archduke was accustomed to call upon the immediate services of any favourite attendant who happened to be at hand. Taking the two letters, I immediately proceeded to read that which I easily recognised by the cachet and handwriting to be my master's, carelessly allowing the second letter to lose itself upon the table, which was already littered with papers and documents.

The contents of the Archduke's were short and to the point; he had decided not to spend Monday in town, but was proceeding that afternoon to Meyerling. I was instructed to procure several manuscripts from the Hofburg Library, dealing with literary work in which the Prince was then interested, and forward them on the morrow, by special messenger, to Meyerling. The Hofburg Library, is, I may say, a very impressive

department of the motley congeries of buildings which form the Imperial Palace, and is, perhaps, the greatest princely library in Europe, containing, as it does, over one million volumes. It is, however, as well organised as any official or Government department in Vienna, and I was soon placed in possession of the desired documents, which were packed and prepared for dispatching. Charged with my manuscripts, I proceeded to visit my friend Wolfram at his quarters and, indeed, passed the rest of the day with him and his hospitable Christiane, returning home after midnight.

Wolfram, I may add, had been made acquainted with the Archduke's discourse to myself on 25th January, and had agreed with me that His Highness was probably the best judge of the situation, that any further interference in matters which were already officially provided for must be overstepping the bounds of our concern once we had been tacitly charged with a well-meant but unnecessary officiousness. In any case, Wolfram expressed an assurance that his Bocher ally in Berlin was certain not to fail him, and with the relieving agreement that our suspicions had probably been exaggerated, we bade each other good-night, myself returning to my apartments. At noon on the next day, Tuesday, I took the sudden resolution to spend the remainder of the week in the neighbourhood of Baden, a pine country which suited my constitution, and where I had previously, the occasion

offering, made short sojourns of two or three days —at Heiligen Kreuz, to be exact. At the same time I could dispatch the Archduke's manuscripts to Meyerling by my servant Bratfisch. The latter I ordered to prepare effects for a few days' stay at Heiligen Kreuz and follow me thither by the four-o'clock train.

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I arrived at the Southern Station a few minutes before the early afternoon train was due to leave, and, as I entered, had the surprise of seeing Madame Larricarda issue in her carriage from the direction of the departure platform. Her face, I thought, was rather flushed, but whether or not on account of this *malencontre*, I do not know, and now shall never know. Duly I took my ticket and a place in an empty compartment, the slow service, in the course of a halting performance, depositing me at Baden. Here another surprise awaited me, for on leaving the train I beheld, issuing from a compartment ahead of my own, the elegant figure of one whom I had long had reason to know. It was Mademoiselle Vetsera.

In such a place and under such circumstances, I determined that my rôle should not seem to be that of a spy on the lady's movements, and so tarried while the little station was cleared of its few passengers. After some delay the wheels of a moving carriage made themselves heard, and supposing it to be a Meyerling equipage, I waited till the sound died away, and passed out at the gate. A fleeting glimpse of the conveyance, as it

rolled off, told me that it was an ordinary hackney coach of the provincial type; its direction was the road to Meyerling.

There were no other vehicles in sight, and refusing the offer of a station official to procure one, I decided to walk to Heiligen Kreuz, the day being bright and clear, although extremely cold. Accordingly, I took the road north-westward, meditating my two surprises, and much absorbed in them—*meditans nescio quid nugarum, et totus in illis*, as we used to say at Feldkirch. That Madame Larricarda had accompanied Mademoiselle Vetsera to the Southern Station, now seemed fairly clear. But why Madame Larricarda's equipage—since the younger lady had a score of her father's at her own disposal? And why the conjunction of these particular stars at this particular time, since, owing to her profuse hospitality to the Prussians during the past few months, Madame Larricarda had passed under an inevitable cloud? And since Rudolph and Marie had ceased to meet at Madame Larricarda's, the lady, I knew for fact, had broken off relations with her erstwhile hostess; why then this sudden *rapprochement*? And the flushed face of the Baroness as she left the station, with the startled and conscious look of the person who had seen yet pretends not to have seen—mystery. Thinking this and much more along the route, I soon found myself slowing down in the pine groves that fringe the little townlet of Heiligen Kreuz, moving in meditative mood through the woods,

inhaling the balsam-tang'd air of the Tannenwald as I walked. Suddenly a boisterous greeting struck my ear, and looking up, I beheld the brown chalet known as the Gasthaus, with Herr Wirt himself, the landlord, advancing towards me, bare-headed and with an outstretched hand of welcome. I had sojourned several times before under his roof-tree, and we were good friends.

"*Salve*, in Gottes Namen!" he cried—the common sportsman's greeting in these parts. "I kiss your hand. A hundred welcomes, Herr Sekretär—but"—and he whispered it solemnly—"we had a great company here yesterday—the very Crown Prince Rudolph himself. You are all conspiring to heap honour on my old age."

"*Silentium*, Wirt," I returned, in another sportsman's term when the guns are creeping, "silence, my dear Wirt; but His Highness does not come here frequently, does he?"

"The first time for two years—alas!" the landlord replied, "and then only because his carriage broke down in the cursed road—no, I mean the blessed road, for it gave me the blessing of his presence," and the old sportsman gave lung to his jollity as only the pine-woodsmen can. "The Archduke helped his coachmen to extricate the carriage from a ditch; then all came up to slake their thirst. And they drank of the best, as you shall."

"Wirt," I replied, "I will take my old rooms and remain with you till the close of the week. The Archduke returns from Meyerling on Saturday

or Sunday next. My man Bratfisch arrives this evening with effects."

"Bratfisch?" questioned the Wirt, "but we had Bratfisch here yesterday with His Highness—Joseph Bratfisch."

"Well, my man is Conrad Bratfisch—they are cousins, Wirt," I explained.

"Ah, so? But, Herr Sekretär, you look well, and are a thousand times welcome to my house," said the old man, as he showed me into the chalet hall.

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The Gasthaus prided itself on the special excellence of its cellar, and its Tokay was certainly of a superior brand, as I already knew, and a rare drink in cold weather. In ordering a bottle, therefore, with my evening meal, I was fully prepared for a lengthy disquisition from my Wirt on the virtues of this particular *cuvée*, and was not surprised when, in accordance with the ritual of Austrian sporting landlords, my host appeared in person to dust, draw and serve his precious wine.

"My cellar has been badly depleted during the past week, Herr Sekretär," he commented. "I have had four guests here from a country towards which I have never been well disposed. I mean Prussia—my four gentlemen came from Berlin, and had they known of my Tokay, I fear I should now have none to offer you; for in truth, they have nearly drunk me dry."

"Prussians here in Heiligen Kreuz!" I re-

marked, with some surprise. "And what doing, Wirt? Vienna is overrun with them in these days."

"Well," he replied, "they said but little about themselves, explaining only that they were going farther afield after game. They left only this morning, and I can assure you I was not sorry to see the last of them—a noisy, overbearing and quarrelsome kind. No, I do not like them, though we speak the same language."

"Of course they told you where they were going to?" I suggested.

"No, indeed, Excellency," replied the landlord simply; "and I am so pleased to be rid of them that I do not at all care. They took the northern road, and had they not left here to-day I might have been forced to suggest a change of scene to them. Rough-housing is hardly strong enough for the way they used the place—drinking, swearing, singing, card-playing, firing off their guns in the open, insulting the house-women—oh, but I am glad they have left, I can tell you, Herr Sekretär."

"They saw His Highness yesterday, of course?" I inquired.

"*Gott sei Dank, nein,* Herr Sekretär. Fortunately they were over in Baden when His Highness arrived. They returned for the evening meal and tendered their very welcome notice." And the old man's commercial instincts asserting themselves, he added, with a grin: "Like true Prussians, they quarrelled about the bill, in order

to find an excuse not to tip the servants. It is an old trick of the Prussians."

Having concluded my meal, I invited the landlord to keep me company while we smoked over the great log-fire. He had been a corporal of the Imperial *Leib Garde*, and previously had seen service in the war against Prussia in 1866; a noted sportsman, he had trapped wolf and bear and shot white eagle in the Styrian Alps and been one of the corps of guides that accompanied the Archduke on his memorable hunting trip down the Danube to the Iron Gates.

"His Majesty Kaiser Franz, God preserve him," and the old fellow rose as he uttered this pious ejaculation, "once honoured this old room, with Prince Furstenburg and Prince Kinsky, when he hunted from the Palace at Baden. I waited on him as he drank my own home-brew and smoked his black cigars in that very chair. I am an older man than His Majesty by six years—was born in '24—but he never comes this way now, and I have not seen him since the funeral of old Kaiser Ferdinand, in whose Body Guard I served for four years, and afterwards in the present Emperor's for three. It is my opinion, Herr Sekretär, that all is not well with old Austria. The country seems to be owned by those Prussians, and you find them everywhere nowadays. They are worse than the Jews, in truth; for at least your Jew fights in the open, and as every man of sense knows that a Jew means to cheat him if he can, why, he is a fool who overdeals with him,

or takes him for a friend. But those Prussians are like snakes without a rattle, and possess you before you are aware of their presence."

"Better times are ahead of us, however, my dear Wirt," I remarked dreamily, for in truth I was wondering why Bratfisch had not yet reported himself. "We have high hopes of the Crown Prince, as you know."

"So be it, Excellenz," replied the old man; "but you remember the prophecy of the old witch of Alland near by?"

"No, indeed, Wirt; I have never heard of it," I answered.

"The old lady, who must have seen over a century, is dead now—God rest her," explained the landlord. "She used to come over here every week for her three black loaves and a slice of game, which were always at her disposal, poor creature. She foretold me the early death of my only children. She was here the day our Kaiser Franz arrived with Prince Furstenburg and Prince Kinsky, and it was then she made her prophecy. Like all very old persons, she presumed on her many years, and as the Kaiser was leaving the chalet approached him and made a deep reverence.

"'Was willst, alte Mutter?' asked His Majesty, amused at the hardihood of the ancient dame.

"'I would read your hand, Majesty,' she replied.

"'Gewisz—certainly,' said the ever-friendly Kaiser Franz, and readily presented his hand.

"The old creature gazed for a moment at the

open palm, while all around stood silent. And having gazed, she made another reverence as if to withdraw.

"'But,' cried the laughing Emperor, 'you have told me nothing. What says my hand, alte Mutter?' and he presented his palm once more.

"'Seventy full years of kingship to your Majesty,' the old lady read. 'Yet three great sorrows. But the end is glorious—and the Emperors of Germany will again reign in Vienna.'"

With many reminiscences of his sporting and military days, the old Wirt regaled me as the clock crept on to midnight, at which hour, Bratfisch having not yet arrived, I decided to retire.

"My man, as you see, Wirt, has disappointed me," I said. "Unfortunately the fellow drinks at times, but as he is an excellent servant otherwise, I overlook this particular shortcoming. Doubtless he will arrive later. In the meantime, I require rest, and as my effects have not come, you will understand, my dear Wirt, that you can oblige me in a matter of some importance: can you lend me a night-shirt?"

This simple request appeared to tickle my landlord exceedingly, for the old man vented his sense of comedy in a lungful roar. Having escorted me to my room, supplied me with the required sleeping apparel and bade me a good night, the Wirt consigned me to very welcome slumber.

* * * * *

I had decided, as I often do when alone, to

indulge my English tastes while sojourning at the Gasthaus, and had ordered breakfast for nine o'clock. My man Conrad had not as yet, much to my surprise, made his appearance. Hardly, however, had I touched my toasted bacon and eggs when the landlord knocked at the sitting-room door and announced the arrival of my servant. Clearly he had had a night of it, if appearances counted for anything. I was glad, at all events, to see the rascal safe.

"Well, Conrad," I said, with affected sarcasm, "this is a pleasure which is overdue by a dozen hours. Account for yourself."

"Unfortunately, sir," he explained, with a grin, "all the appearances are against me. The truth is, however, I lost the evening train to Baden yesterday, and had to take the last from Vienna —at eleven o'clock. At midnight in Baden I could get no trap, as all but one of the hostelries had closed by that hour. I decided therefore to leave your luggage at the Station——"

"Conrad," I objected reprovingly, "you must distinctly remember my telling you that I expected you to deliver the small packet at Meyerling to His Highness. It should have been there yesterday."

"It is there now, sir," he returned. "I have just tramped over from Meyerling."

"So-ho? And by whose authority did you proceed to Meyerling?" I asked; in some astonishment, although relieved that the Hofburg manuscripts had been delivered.

"When I decided to leave your luggage—which I could not have carried so far—at Baden Station, I fortunately remembered the packet for His Highness, and brought it with me, expecting to get a conveyance here, so that I might deliver it at the Lodge," explained Conrad.

"My own requirements, of course, counted for nothing, you rascal," I commented.

"Excuse me, sir," he went on, with a broad grin, "but the last time we stayed here we left a night-shirt behind. I thought, perhaps——"

"*Du Heiliger Hubertus—aber der Kerl hat Recht*—the fellow is right," cried the landlord, with a quick laugh. "I had quite forgotten it."

"Go on, Conrad," I urged. "What happened after Baden?"

"Well," he explained, "I decided to walk over, and first had a few drinks. It was rather cold, you will acknowledge, sir; so I took a small bottle of Kirsch with me. About two miles outside Baden I came upon the *Gabelung*, where the roads divide, and forgot the instructions given me at Baden. In order to refresh my memory, I took a pull at the Kirsch and——"

"—and, of course, took the easiest road—the road going downhill," the landlord interposed, with a laugh.

"Unfortunately, Herr Wirt, that is so," admitted Bratfisch candidly. "I took the lower road and kept on walking, meeting no one, nor seeing a lighted house along the way. After about two hours' walk, I found myself skirting

a pine-wood, and well recollecting the Tannenwald of this neighbourhood, was certain I was in the right direction. Encouraged by this reflection, I continued on the outskirts of the wood, having had another pull at the flask, and kept on walking —uphill, all the way, for perhaps another hour, when I suddenly came upon the end of the wood where a narrow pathway leads downward——"

"—to the end of the road which you should have taken at first. You were near Purkerdorf or Petersdorf, man; twelve miles from Heiligen Kreuz as the crow flies—well on to Vienna," explained the landlord.

"Fortunately," Conrad proceeded, "as I waited here and looked at my watch, which pointed to close upon three o'clock, early trappers, with guns slung, came down the pathway. When I inquired for the Cross they laughed, telling me it was ten miles through the woods. They gave me a choice of the nearest places—Alland, six miles away, or else Meyerling, three to four. I remembered the packet and decided for Meyerling —late though it was, proceeding with the two hunters down to the high road, which here leads into the valley. They pointed out the dim lights about two to three miles distant.

"'That is Meyerling Schloss,' said one, 'but by the time you get there all will be abed. You had better walk down with us to the Black Eagle. There you may rest, perhaps, till daylight. We go by there.'

"I accompanied them to the Black Eagle,

lying on the left as we reach the vale, and here I entered, the trappers proceeding on their way. He was a bad-tempered man who admitted me at the Black Eagle."

"Old Franz Ernst—I believe you," the landlord commented. "But was it not a fat fellow who admitted you?"

"Yes," my man replied; "very thick, and with a great black beard. My oath, but he could use bad language."

"Old Kurt," explained the Wirt; "he was with me here ten years."

"Well, sir," proceeded Bratfisch, "the inn was full for the game season. There was room nowhere except in the hotel parlour. My grumbler objected, however, that they were strangers just arrived from Petersdorf and going forward for a morning's sport, and might object to my presence. Nevertheless, as I ordered a bottle, he would ask their permission—which was granted. I entered the parlour, where four hunters were sleeping, fully dressed, three of them in chairs and one on a couch. They were not pleased at my arrival, I can assure you, since I woke them from their sleep; but as I said nothing, and sat drinking by the fire, they were silent. I soon fell a-dozing myself, and in an hour or so the four sleepers prepared to go, and soon had left the inn. Shortly afterwards, and as the fire was burning out, I decided to leave the place and make for Meyerling, deliver my packet, and return along the high road to Heiligen Kreuz. As I was

leaving the parlour, I noticed a small wallet lying close by a chair on which one of the hunters had been sleeping; picking it up, I reflected that it was dropped by one of the gentlemen, and placed it in my great-coat pocket, intending to give it to the house-man, but as we had a little argument about the price of my bottle, I forgot to do so. Here is the wallet," said Conrad, producing a worn pocket-book; "only a couple of portraits—the owner and his young lady, I presume."

The landlord and myself looked at the portraits —one that of a typical German girl, the other——

"But," cried the landlord, "this is one of my guests of last week—the noisiest of the gang, too, and a quick drinker. Look, Herr Sekretär," and he handed me the portrait.

I had finished my breakfast and was lighting a cigar, but had reason, nevertheless, to be interested in this particular specimen of the photographic art. It was the picture of the Prussian who had been so offensive towards me at Madame Larricarda's on the previous Friday.

Having satisfied myself by close scrutiny that this was really my unfriendly acquaintance, I requested Conrad to proceed.

"It was just breaking light, sir," he went on, "when I left the Black Eagle Inn, but the road was in fairly good condition, and I soon covered the ground between myself and Meyerling Lodge. It was quite near six o'clock when I reached the Schloss, and as I made for the gates, passed four hunters with guns slung, whom I easily recognised,

from their speech, to be my four companions of the Black Eagle. Passing by the Lodge entrance, I picked my way to the stables at the rear, where, as I expected, I found my cousin Joseph, then just rising, with the intention of calling His Highness. Naturally, he was astonished at my early visit, and gave me a cup of hot coffee, while I explained the adventure which had brought me to Meyerling at that untimely hour. His suggestion that I should wait till His Highness had left for his morning's sport, when he would drive me back, I refused to accept, since I was anxious to return to Heiligen Kreuz as soon as possible and explain my absence. The coffee had revived me, and as the day would soon break clear I felt equal to the journey back. Entrusting my packet, accordingly, to Joseph, and taking his directions for the route to be followed, I bade him adieu, and—here I am, sir. As I left the grounds, I was hailed by Mr Loschek, prowling near the gates. They are early birds at Meyerling evidently. He does not know me. I explained that I was the cousin of Joseph and, as he asked no further questions, passed quickly along. When two miles on my way the sound of two sharp rifle-shots struck upon my ear, and I knew the day's sport had begun."

CHAPTER XX

The Pine-woods round Heiligen Kreuz—An Unexpected *Rencontre*—Dr Widerhofer of Vienna—He announces the Murder of the Archduke and Marie Vetsera—How Baden got the News—We go on to the Lodge—Some Official Declarations and Discrepancies—Joseph Bratfisch's Statements—An Impromptu Entertainment—The Morning of 30th January—Bratfisch and his Master—How the Bodies were found—I visit the Death-chamber—My Importance ceases—A Conversation with Bratfisch—The Alleged Letters of Prince Rudolph—My Wirt arrives—I return to Heiligen Kreuz—A Sad Special to Vienna—Burial of the Crown Prince Rudolph—Koinoff's Last Letter

HAVING dismissed my servant Conrad to a well-earned breakfast, and given orders to the landlord to have my traps fetched from the station at Baden, I prepared for a few hours' excursion through the pine-woods, which from the Gasthaus run for about two miles back on the Heiligen Kreuz road, and form the arc of a circle, the far extremity of which about touches the Gabelung where the route divides. On leaving the chalet about half-past ten, I promised my Wirt, not caring to lunch alone, that I should be back betimes to share his table d'hôte, and struck out through the forest with the intention of gaining the Baden route and returning by the highway—a walk of about six miles. The morning was bright and inviting, the bridle-paths clear, and as I covered the ground the song of the industrious woodman and the music of his axe reminded me of the

welcome fact that Vienna was far distant and myself on holiday.

It had been my intention to question Bratfisch more closely as to the personages staying at the Lodge over at Meyerling, but forbore from doing so, not so much on account of the presence of our Wirt as for the reason that Conrad, who knew nothing of the arrival of Mademoiselle Vetsera at Baden on the previous afternoon, could hardly have learned of the lady's being at Meyerling during his short interview in the early morning with his cousin, Joseph Bratfisch, who, it was tolerably certain, moreover, would hardly have disclosed the fact. And whistling as I tramped, for want of thought, as some English poet puts it, I reached the extremity of the Tannenwald, debouching on the Baden road, where I continued walking, meaning to retrace my steps from the Gabelung. As I reached this point a pair-horsed cab turned the bend and passed me at so terrific a rate that it well-nigh overturned at the junction of the roads, and for the moment its progress was arrested. A pale face peered from the carriage, and at once I recognised the Archduke's body-physician, Doctor Widerhofer, who immediately acknowledged my salute.

"God in heaven," he cried, as I approached the vehicle, "but tell me what has happened?"

"Happened?" I questioned, already alarmed at his evident anguish. "What can you mean, Doctor?"

"Jump in and come on with me," he urged, as

the coachman whipped up the horses. "Have you not heard—the Archduke is dead—found murdered at the Lodge between seven and eight o'clock this morning! But I thought you were with His Highness?"

I could find no words to express my horror at this terrible news, which my mind refused at first to credit.

"Murder—the Archduke—oh, Doctor—surely you dream?" were the only words I could utter, as I flung myself back in the carriage.

"It is no dream, friend—no dream, alas!" he wailed. "I have come by telegraphic summons. How far are we from the Lodge?"

I paid no attention to the question, but snatched the telegram from his hand and read.

"This does not say he is dead," I began, "only an accident——"

"No; but the news is already at Baden," cried the Doctor. "He is dead, and with him his woman. At first the people heard it was the Archduchess. The coachman knows — it was Mademoiselle Vetsera."

I looked at my watch, which indicated fifteen minutes past noon.

"I will go on with you, in God's name," I said; "we can make the Schloss by one o'clock."

* * * * *

It is hardly necessary for me to do more than give the details of a story which moved the emotion of the civilised world in its time. At the investigation which was subsequently held by a

commission composed of Councillors Claudy and Westermayer, Doctors Widerhofer and Mükleiten and Captain Oser, the facts were given to the public in the following way :—

The Archduke had not hunted on Tuesday, 29th January, although his companions, Prince Philip of Coburg and Count Hoyos, had spent the morning in the forest. Late after noon Mademoiselle Vetsera had unexpectedly arrived at the Schloss, and passed the remainder of the evening with the gentlemen. The servant Joseph Bratfisch, a favourite of the Archduke, was summoned towards midnight to the company's presence, and bidden, for want of more expert artists, to regale the party with the latest music hall songs from Vienna. Bratfisch, like many of the Viennese serving-men, was a capital singer and an unusually clever whistler, possessing in this latter capacity an inimitable gift of rendering the song of birds—a great recommendation to the Archduke, who was a noted student of bird life. It was not denied that much wine had been drunk during the night. All concerned retired after two o'clock in the morning—the Archduke and the lady to the sleeping-chamber on the ground floor.

At this point the improbable and untenable make their appearance :

It was stated that on retiring at two A.M., the Archduke, already flown with drink, deliberately sat down at the desk in his little study hard by, and indited letters—the serious and solemn last

letters of a man who is bent on self-destruction—to his mother, the Empress Elizabeth, to Kaiser Franz Josef, to the Crown Princess Stephanie, to the Prince of Braganza, and to the Police Commissioner of Vienna, Szoegyeni. All these letters were said to have been found on an open table, while in his correspondence, or ready-mail basket, was afterwards found a letter addressed to his friend and editorial guide, Weilen, promising to complete a piece of literary work already begun, a sketch entitled *Gödollö*.

The servant Bratfisch stated that about the regular hour for preparing for the chase, six-forty-five A.M., he had, as instructed, called the Archduke, who ordered him to draw the curtains of the window to the left of the Prince's bed, with a view to seeing how the weather promised. On the Archduke pronouncing it too dark for sport, Bratfisch retired. It was held that the Archduke and his mistress committed suicide between seven and eight A.M., both being discovered dead at the latter hour. It was also stated, for the benefit of the public, that, while the lady had taken strychnine, the Prince had shot himself with a revolver in the left temple—two statements which took no account of the facts that the Prince was also said to have been found lying on his right side—with his back exposed to the window on the left of the couch—while the girl's body was declared to have been found reclining as if normally at rest, a condition altogether inconsistent with death by strychnine, which distorts the frame.

afterwards, and eventually conveyed the news to the Empress Elizabeth. Count Bombelles, I afterwards learned, was the official chosen to give the tragic tidings to the Archduke's consort.

Already, by the early afternoon, men, women and children, of all classes and from every village in the Crown land territories, were quickly congregating in the Lodge grounds, all of them as if stricken by the loss of a dear friend, and many of them giving vent to their tears. Among those who drove in from the outlying parts was my landlord of Heiligen Kreuz, who, with some vague idea of serving me, after the news had spread, had allowed my man Conrad to accompany him. This was fortunate, and I instructed Bratfisch to ascertain the particulars as to the arrival of Mademoiselle Vetsera, on the previous day, from his cousin Joseph, an excellent servant who would have given his life for the Crown Prince.

About four o'clock I took my last look at the Archduke Rudolph, in whose large sleeping-chamber a *chapelle ardente* had swiftly been prepared, several nuns and two priests being present in prayer. The face was peaceful, and hardly more pale than in life. The forehead was bound at the temples with bandages, on which, however, no trace of wound-discoloration appeared. On the coverlet, over the breast, lay a silver crucifix, and lighted candelabra lined each side of the death-bed. Softly the religious were intoning the Litany for the Dead.

As no preparations had been made for my stay

at the Lodge, and on Loschek assuring me that the residence would be full for that night, I decided to accept my landlord's suggestion of returning to Heiligen Kreuz with him, reflecting that, however reluctant I might feel to abandon my dead master, the only black wearing apparel I had was at the old Gasthaus. It had already been arranged that the body should be taken on the morrow—the last day of January—by special train, to Vienna, which I was to accompany, according to the instructions of Hoyos, as one of the principal mourners.

Before leaving the Schloss I took care to hear from Joseph Bratfisch particulars regarding the visit of Mademoiselle Vetsera.

"But," explained Bratfisch, "His Highness never expected the lady. Her arrival was the surprise of his life, since he had ordered me to prepare his study for work he intended to do."

"And did she make no explanations?" I inquired.

"The lady assured His Highness more than twice within my hearing, yesterday afternoon, that she had come on receipt of a letter from the Archduke requesting her to do so, and even produced the note, which His Highness tossed carelessly aside, declaring that though it resembled his handwriting, he had written no letter. Nevertheless, he was not displeased to see her, and"—he added reflectively—"they had at least a happy last afternoon together."

"And as to the other letters—did you see them, and to whom were they addressed?" was my next question.

Bratfisch gave me the names of the personages to whom the letters found had been addressed, assuring me that he had seen them on the table when the door had been burst open, but had not noted them before.

"And when did His Highness write them, think you, Bratfisch?" I asked.

"That is to me a mystery," he replied; shrugging his shoulders, "unless they were written between the hour six-forty-five, when I first called His Highness, and eight o'clock. It is, indeed, doubtful, sir, and you will perhaps understand it, when I say that it is unlikely he could have written them after retiring to his apartment early this morning. But, of course," he added thoughtfully, "early morn is the suicide's hour, as we always say in Vienna." And he then went on to describe the position of the bodies when they were found.

In due course I returned to Heiligen Kreuz, and on the morrow proceeded, as arranged, to Vienna, with the mortuary train, where the body was received by Kaiser Franz. I was also among those who attended the obsequies at the old Capuchin Church; where the Archduke Rudolph was laid among his forbears—the one-hundred-and-fourteenth Habsburger gathered in that ancient crypt, with eleven Emperors, fourteen Empresses, a King of Rome—Napoleon's son—

two Queens, twenty-seven Archdukes, fifty-four Archduchesses, two Dukes and two Electors.

* * * * *

I had, on returning to Vienna, proceeded to my chambers by the Hofgarten, and here among my papers found the second of the two letters which Conrad had delivered to me, as I related, on the Monday on which my master had proceeded to Meyerling. It came from Koinoff, and was dated Thurdsay, 24th January, from the Angel Hotel, at Liverpool, whence he declared he was about to sail for the United States, to begin life under new circumstances. Money, he admitted, had proved too great a temptation for his power of resistance, and he had, towards the end, engaged in the adventure of playing the double spy. The letter concluded with a piece of advice which was now of no avail :

"Keep your closest attention on the Archduke's lower household," he wrote. "Any harm that comes to His Highness will be the work of persons near him who are in close collusion with Berlin."

EPILOGUE

It will be remembered that the banishment of several persons took place as a result of the inquiry into the circumstances which culminated in the tragedy of Meyerling, over which, I need hardly add, a veil of inscrutable mystery has persistently hung, and anent which several versions are still current—even in Austria-Hungary.

It will also be within the recollection of well-informed persons that while a man so closely in touch with European diplomatic circles as the late Mr Labouchere absolved the late Prince Bismarck, the Chancellor, of complicity in any conspiracy which sought to remove the Crown Prince Rudolph from the path of Prussian ambitions (*Truth*, March, 1889), he made no attempt to extend this absolution to more aggressive representatives of Pan-Germanism in Berlin.

A well-known English authority on contemporary Germanic history, while committing himself to no definite accusation against anyone, in the case of the death of the Austrian Crown Prince, admits the opinion to have been current throughout the diplomatic services of Europe that the "enemies of the House of Habsburg" counted for a factor in the tragic episode of Meyerling.

Encyclopædic works of unquestioned importance have expressed a similar view, while reliable

French writers have held the opinion that these enemies of the House of Habsburg sought, by taking advantage of the Archduke's unfortunate *liaison* with Mademoiselle Vetsera, as well as of his tendency to a pronounced liberalism in his religious views, to create in Vatican circles a feeling hostile to the Dual Monarchy—all to the furtherance of Prussian political ambitions.

For my part, I have presented, in their proper place in the narrative, the political aspects of the case, and am convinced that those who possess intimate knowledge of the anti-Habsburg bias in Prussia of the later eighties, as well as of the trends of Prussian militaristic world-policy of that period, will support my presentment of the intrigue in its salient features.

The so-called "Baroness Larricarda" was among those banished by Imperial edict. At the same time two members of princely families, whose names it is now needless to mention, were exiled from Austria-Hungary. The man Loschek was also expelled the dominions.

And here my task ends.

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